DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 211 CG 015 194

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TITLE Exploring the Parenthood Choice: An Activities Guide for Educators.
INSTITUTION National Alliance for Optional Parenthood, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 82p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Alliance for Optional Parenthood, 2010 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 ($5.25).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Case Studies; Child Development; *Decision Making; *Family Life Education; *Family Planning; Individual Power; *Learning Activities; *Parenthood Education; Secondary Education; *Values Clarification
IDENTIFIERS *Childless Families

ABSTRACT

This guide for educators, produced by the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood, contains 20 activities designed to help adolescents explore the issues of parenting, with a special emphasis on parenthood as a choice. Activities to implement the learning objectives are suggested, including values clarification exercises, infor- mation sharing, community experiences, role plays, and case studies. Each section covers a different aspect of the parenthood choice: (1) preliminary questions; (2) resources for family life; (3) knowledge about children; (4) the parenthood option; (5) the childfree option; and (6) the decision. Facilitator instructions, worksheets, suggestions for integrating the activities into existing programs, and the role of the leader are discussed. The appendices contain information to increase the leader's knowledge about childlessness and about resources in the parenthood education field. (Author/NRB)

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Exploring the Parenthood Choice

An Activities Guide for Educators

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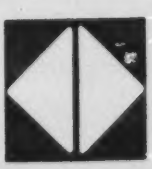
by Ann Ulmschneider
Program Director, NAOP



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed ideas, time, and energy to this publication. Appreciation is extended to NAOP staff members Carole Baker, Marjory Immer, Gail McKirdy, and Dorothy Lohmann Wilson, for assistance and support.

The following teachers and educators offered valuable suggestions and reviewed material:

Doug Beckstein, Center for Population Options, Washington, D. C.

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William Bernardy, NAOP President

Anne J. Freeman, Myrtle Grove Instructional Center, Florida

Loretta Greenleaf, James Madison University, Virginia

Deborah Hollander, Consultant, Virginia

Margaret C. House and Staff, Center for Population and Health, Columbia University

Jeanne Lindsay, Teen Mother Program, California

Martha Roper, St. Louis Public Schools, Missouri

Marcella Schuyler, Pat Bandell, and Nancy Lohr, Baltimore City Public Schools, Maryland

Sarah Spengler and Michelle Sims, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, D. C.

Faye Wattleton, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, New York

Tim Wernette, Planned Parenthood of Los Angeles, California

Cover Design by Gary Goldman

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Introduction

Each year the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood sends out tens of thousands of copies of its "Am I Parent Material?" to educators and service providers across the country. The pamphlet prompts people to think about various dimensions of the parent role by listing questions to consider before deciding whether or not to be a parent. It delivers the message, "You do have a choice."

This guide for educators is NAOP's response to the interest generated by the pamphlet. The activities contained in it will help adolescents explore the many issues raised in the "Am I Parent Material?" pamphlet. The guide not only raises questions, but suggests concrete ways that educators can help adolescents begin to answer the questions for themselves.

The Parenthood/Childfree Choice

This guide is different from most parenthood education material in that the focus is on parenthood as a choice. The activities are not simply preparation for parenthood, but preparation for making the decision about whether or not to be a parent. The assumption behind the guide is not that all students will be parents someday, but that all students need to think about what is involved in parenthood and be aware of alternatives to parenthood, in order to make responsible choices.

The guide helps students explore the realities of parenthood and introduces them to the idea that some people choose not to be parents. Throughout the guide, those who are childless by choice are called "childfree" people. The word "childfree" implies that people have said "No" to parenthood in order to say "Yes" to other life options. To be childfree does not necessarily mean to be "free" from children; many childfree people choose to interact with children outside the parent role.

The word "childless" includes people who are not physically able to have children as well as those who are childfree. You will need to explain the terms childless and childfree to students because they may not be familiar with them. Read Appendix A for background information about childlessness statistics and trends.

Organization of the Guide

Each section of the guide focuses on different learning objectives. The guide suggests 20 different activities to implement the objectives, including values clarification exercises, information sharing, community experiences, role plays, and case studies. Activities are grouped into separate sections, each covering a different aspect of the parenthood choice.

Section I: Preliminary Activities (Activities #1 and 2)	To encourage students to think about the future and reflect on what they learn.

Section II: Resources for Family Life (Activities #3-6)	To teach students about family diversity and to explore "people, time, and money" as basic ingredients of family life.
Section III: Knowledge About Children (Activities #7-10)	To increase knowledge about child development through actual experiences of interacting with children.
Section IV: The Parenthood Option (Activities #11-14)	To stimulate student thinking about the pros and cons of being parents.
Section V: The Childfree Option (Activities #15-17)	To introduce the childfree option and to examine the pros and cons of this choice.
Section VI: The Decision (Activities #18-20)	To increase knowledge about issues and steps in the parenthood/childfree decision-making process.
Appendix A and B	To increase the leader's knowledge about childlessness and about resources in the parenthood education field.

Special Features: Activity #4 includes a case study of a childfree couple. #14 includes two essays written by teenage parents. #12 is an exercise for using the pamphlet "Am I Parent Material?" with a group.

How to Use the Guide

The guide is designed to be used in both formal and informal educational settings, including classrooms, clinic workshops, and youth groups. The activities require a minimal amount of leader preparation time and utilize simple materials.

Each activity will take approximately one 50-60 minute period. Many of the exercises include worksheets which you can copy or duplicate for student use. You can detach worksheet masters by undoing the fasteners. You may wish to put the pages in a looseleaf binder.

The guide can be used in many different ways, depending on the type of course or group you are leading and the needs of your students. You will need to read through the activities and decide which activities are appropriate in your situation.

Several of the activities challenge students to go beyond their own immediate concerns and to think about the future. Students' abilities to do this will depend on their maturity and willingness to grow. You are the best judge of these qualities.

Here are a few suggestions about integrating the activities into your current program or course:

1. Using the activities in sequence: The activities are arranged to build on one another in exploring issues involved in the parenthood/childfree choice. They move from introductory activities, to exploration of the parenthood and childfree options to the decision-making process. All 20 activities could be used in sequence as part of a semester course.

2. Selecting specific activities for mini-workshops or workshop series: If you work in a clinic, community agency, or youth center, you may want to choose a small number of activities for use in special workshops. The following activities are recommended for a core sequence:

   #11 Reasons for and against being a parent
   #15 Reasons for and against being childfree
   # 6 Decisions about money
   #14 What is it like to be a teenage parent
   #19 Case studies: Steps in Making The Decision

   These six would expose students to both options and to practical aspects of the decision. If you must choose only one or two activities for a one-day workshop, try combining #11 and #15 and supplement with #14 or #19.

3. Selecting activities to fit in an existing family life education curriculum: Since the activities focus on the parenthood/childfree option, they could complement existing courses in family life education and home economics. Related units might be on the topics of human sexuality, family or peer relationships, and child development. The activities on family life resources could fit well into sessions about the family or budgeting money and allocating time. The activities about the parenthood/childfree choice could offer a useful lead-in for presenting information about contraception.

   Knowledge about the parenthood/childfree choice adds an important dimension to knowledge about sexuality and family life.

The Role of the Leader

The activities in this guide are designed to stimulate student thinking about the parenthood/childfree choice and to open up a range of options for future consideration. The activities are not designed to encourage students to make a permanent decision about parenthood. They provide concrete ways to teach about options.

The activities are based on an educational philosophy which values student ideas, feelings, and experiences. As an educator, you play the role of group leader or facilitator. You set up a structure for learning, ask questions, guide discussion, and present information.

Although the guide offers a skeleton of step-by-step directions for doing activities, you provide the flesh and blood. You know the needs of your students and can select and modify activities to meet those needs. Here are a few suggestions to help you play your role effectively:

1. Establish an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for individual differences of opinion. Issues about family, parenthood, and the childfree lifestyle are all resolved differently by individuals.

2. Make it a point to "process" every activity by asking the entire group to share reactions at the end of each session. A special discussion section at the end of each activity offers ways of doing this. You need to stay in touch with what your students are thinking and feeling because the subject matter might be sensitive at times.

3. Most of the exercises encourage students to express personal values and opinions. Students should feel free to "pass" if they do not wish to share reactions. They should not feel pressured to participate.

4. Student opinions which are expressed in group sessions must be treated confidentially. Encourage students not to gossip about what other students say.

5. Model the behaviors you expect of students. Show respect for differences of opinion and be open to changing sessions around to meet student needs.

6. Examine your own values and feelings about parenthood before you begin. It's important for you to believe that parenthood should be a chosen role and that it's OK not to be a parent. Identify your own values about the parenthood/childfree choice so that you are aware of your personal biases. What do you think are appropriate and inappropriate reasons for being a parent or being childfree? Remember that you are encouraging students to identify and form their own values. It's important that you recognize your own.

7. Let NAOP know about your reaction to this guide by filling out and returning the evaluation form included at the end of the Appendix sections. We need to learn about ways to meet your needs for educational materials.

#1 Evaluation Before and After the Unit

PURPOSE

Evaluation is a useful tool for both you and your students to assess the learning process. Students examine how their ideas about parenthood and about their personal options have changed. You evaluate how to modify activities to improve their effectiveness.

ACTIVITY

1) Written Essay: Before the group begins to explore the parenthood decision, ask students to write a brief essay (ten sentences) on the responsibilities of parenthood. Advise students that the essays will be returned in several weeks.

   After the sequence is completed, ask the students to write another essay on the responsibilities of parenthood. Invite them, but do not require them, to add a personal statement which answers: "What issues will I need to think about before I decide about parenthood?"

   Compare the first essay with the second and note changes in student ideas about parenthood.[1]

2) Group Discussion: If you prefer not to give a written assignment, conduct a group discussion about the responsibilities of parenthood and write down student ideas on a sheet of newsprint. After the unit on the parenthood choice is completed, display the list and ask students to write down ideas. Encourage students to write down the responsibilities that will be most important for them to think about before they decide about parenthood. Invite students to share their thoughts with the group. Ask them how they would teach someone else about parenthood.

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[1] Based on a suggestion from Martha Roper, high school teacher, St. Louis, MO. She points out that students are highly motivated to study contraception after they have learned about the responsibilities of parenthood.

#2 Images of the Future

PURPOSE

The purpose of this activity is to help students become aware of their vision of the future, including fantasies and realistic ideas. Their images will probably include thoughts about adult roles, places to live, travel, career accomplishments and personal interests; they may or may not include images of parenthood.

This activity is a warm-up exercise designed to precede the topic of the parenthood choice. It is meant to be a low-key exercise. Students should be asked to relax and fantasize and not to concern themselves with the practicality of their responses. Activity #20 in the guide complements this one by asking students to identify future possibilities by drawing a lifeline.

ACTIVITY

Ask each student to write down a quick response to the series of incomplete sentences on the following page. Either read the sentences aloud or make copies for each student. The student will complete the sentence with the first thought that comes to mind. Students may share their responses later on in a small group discussion if they choose to do so.

DISCUSSION

Divide the group into groups of 5 or 6 members. Ask the members to share how they responded to the statements. One way of getting the discussion started is to ask each person to choose one statement and share his/her response. Other people then respond to the same statement. Each one in turn chooses a statement, shares a response, and invites other responses to that statement. Students have the option of not participating or "passing" if they do not wish to speak.

If students feel comfortable sharing with the whole group, you might draw up a list of student responses to several statements. What are their ideas of great jobs, travel plans, new things to learn, etc?

WORKSHEET
ACTIVITY #2: IMAGES OF THE FUTURE

INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

1. When I finish school, I might like to _____.
2. Someday, I might like to travel to _____.
3. Under no circumstances would I ever _____.
4. I see marriage as _____.
5. My idea of a great job is _____.
6. Someday, I might like to learn to _____.
7. If I were a parent I would _____.
8. I wish that I could create _____.
9. When I'm 25 I would like to _____.
10. My dream place to live is _____.
11. I wish that I could play _____.
12. When I'm 30 I might like to live with _____.
13. If I do not have a child, I might _____.
14. I would like to study _____.
15. If I do not get married, I might _____.
16. Being a parent is _____.
17. I like to dream about _____.

#3 Family Members

PURPOSE

This activity will encourage students to think about what a family is and how family members relate to each other. It can serve as a bridge to or from discussion of other topics included under the umbrella of family life education. It is designed to be a very brief introduction to a subject which is complex. The very word "family" stirs up different feelings in different people, both positive and negative. This activity does not define "family;" it encourages students to think about their own ideas of family and to compare their ideas to the ideas of others.

The three activities which follow this one in the section "Resources for Family Life" give students the opportunity to explore further the ideas which are touched upon in this activity. The four activities, used together, will prompt students to investigate three of the basic resources for family life -- people, time, and money. Activity #4 exposes students to facts about types of living arrangements in the United States and encourages them to learn about real life experiences of individual parents and childfree people. Activity #5 focuses on how time could be used differently by parents and by people without children. Activity #6 looks at expense budgets for supporting a child compared to budgets for supporting a couple without children.

ACTIVITY

To help students start to think about what a family is and how family members relate to one another, ask students to draw pictures of their families. Let them know that it is acceptable to draw simple stick figures. You will not collect the drawings or ask them to show what they draw. Explain that the activity is a thought-starter to lead into small group discussions about families.

After students have had time to complete their drawings, divide the total group into small groups. Ask each group to write a list on newsprint of things families might do together or feelings they might share. Examples are: eat meals, share money, argue, watch TV, show affection.

After the small group discussion, post the lists from each group. On the chalkboard or on newsprint, write "A family is a group of people who _____." Ask students to select 3-5 phrases which are most important to them, personally, and to write the phrases on their family pictures.

DISCUSSION

Ask if anyone would like to share the phrases which they thought were most important. Why do they feel it is important for family members to do these actions or show these feelings?

Questions for further discussion:

--Do you think that all members of a family must be related in order to be a family? Why or why not?
--Do people who are not related to each other sometimes feel like "family?" How?
--How do family members who do not live together maintain family relationships or keep their family ties? (E.g., some grandparents or young adults who move away from home)
--Is it necessary for people to raise children in order to be a family? Why or why not?
--Is a family different from a group of people who live together? Why or why not?

Expanding the Activity

If you would like to explore the topic of families further, try using the statements below as a basis for small group discussion or written essays. Ask students to comment on what the quote means to them and whether they agree or disagree with it. The quotes were made by various people during the 1980 White House Conference on Families.[1]

"Families are important, but they come in all sizes, shapes, and colors." Helen Fisher, Alaska State Hearing for the Conference.

"All families need honorary members. Families need to be elastic." Jane Howard, Author, Research Forum of the Conference.

"There's only one true family structure." Protester's sign at regional conference.

"A family is two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption." Minority report signed by 168 delegates at the three regional conferences.

"The widely differing regional, religious, cultural, and ethnic heritages of our country affect family life and contribute to its diversity and strength. Families also differ in age and composition. There are families in which several generations live together, families with two parents or one, and families with and without children." President Jimmy Carter, Presidential Announcement, 1-30-79.

"I asked my son Patrick, 'What makes a family strong?' He said, 'Families that put up the Christmas tree together.'" Kay McGowan, Detroit hearing for the Conference.

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[1] Listening to America's Families: Action for the '80's is the report on the 1980 White House Conference on Families. The full report and an Executive Summary of the report are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20401.

#4 Families: With and Without Children

This activity is divided into two parts. Part One requires one period (50-60 minutes). Part Two requires 1-3 periods, depending on the specific activities you select.

PURPOSE

Part One: Students will learn basic information about five types of living arrangements in the U.S. They will generate examples of how individuals might live in various kinds of households or families during their lifetimes.

Part Two: This is a selection of activities which encourage students to take a closer look at two of the family/household types presented in Part One. Students will be exposed to some of the real life experiences of parents and childfree couples. They will be able to look beyond their own experiences and reflect on various approaches which other people take in shaping their lives. (The leader has the option of expanding this activity to include exposure to people from other kinds of living arrangements.)

Part One: Living Arrangements in the U.S.

ACTIVITY

Before the group meets, copy the sub-headings from the Census Bureau chart on page 12 on to newsprint or the chalkboard. Explain to the students that the sub-headings are labels which describe five different kinds of household types in the U.S.

Before you fill in the actual percentages and numbers, from the chart, ask students to guess what percentage of people live in each situation. Mark down estimates volunteered by several students next to each category and see if the majority in the group agree with these estimates. Then, fill in the actual 1979 figures from the Census Bureau which are shown on the chart.

To make the numbers more meaningful for students, compare the numbers to familiar populations. For example, "100 million people is ___ times the number of people in (nearest large town)." It might be helpful to draw a pie diagram divided according to percentages on the chart.

DISCUSSION

After students have had the opportunity to study the chart, ask them to give examples of the kinds of families who live in each household category. Some examples of households are listed below to help you get the discussion started. Generate additional examples from your group.

--HUSBAND AND WIFE WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 includes parents in a first or second marriage with child(ren) at home, parents with adopted child(ren) at home.

--HUSBAND AND WIFE WITHOUT CHILDREN UNDER 18 includes parents whose children have moved away from home, childfree couples, couples who are waiting or undecided about having a child.

--SINGLE-PARENT includes single mothers and fathers.

--ALONE includes single, divorced or separated individuals, a widow or widower.

--ALL OTHER includes unmarried couples, groups of adults who share a household.

--Several of the categories could include aunts, uncles, grandparents, in-laws, or non-relatives who live in the household.

After the group has generated examples of different households, discuss how one person might live in different households at different times in his/her life. Encourage the students to think of various possibilities. One person could easily move through the various kinds of households during one lifetime. You should emphasize the idea that people choose to live different ways at different times and that all people do not fit into one type of household or family.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF PEOPLE IN THE U.S., 1979

(Not in Institutions)

Household Category	Percentage of People (who live in this type)	Number of People
Husband-Wife with Children Under 18 at Home	50%	106,924,000
Husband-Wife with No Children Under 18 at Home	25%	54,031,000
One-Parent Household	9%	19,813,000
Alone	8%	17,201,000
All Other	8%	17,966,000
TOTAL (Non-institutional)	100%	215,935,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. Percentages and numbers for the chart were derived from two March, 1979 records, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements (Series P-20, #349) and "Household and Family Characteristics" (Series P-20, #352). Dr. Paul Glick used these categories for a bar graph which compares 1960, 1970, and 1978. (Chart 14 in American Families and Living Arrangements, prepared for the White House Conference on Families by the Bureau of the Census. Available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20401.)

Part Two: Life Experiences of Parents and Childfree People

ACTIVITY

Choose one or several of the following activities to encourage students to investigate the life experiences of both parents and childfree people. (Expand the ideas to include people in other living situations, if you choose, e.g., single people, members of communal groups.) At the end of each activity, give students the opportunity to discuss what they learned from the experience with you and their peers.

1) Interview Assignment: Ask some of the students to interview a parent outside of class to obtain information about what being a parent is like for him or her. Ask other students to interview a person who is childfree (has decided not to have children). Give students an outline of questions to ask. Here are a few suggestions: "Why did you decide to be a parent/be childfree? What have you learned from being a parent/being childfree? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of being a parent/being childfree? Students might be interested in interviewing single parents or teenage parents. They must respect the confidentiality of the people interviewed and clearly explain that they are doing an assignment for a group or class project.

2) Tape-recording: Tape two interviews: one with a parent and one with a childfree person or assign several students to tape the interviews. Play the tapes for the group.

If you do not wish to tape a live interview, you could tape-record case studies of parents and childfree people which are published in books and share the recording with the group. One case study of a childfree couple is included at the end of this activity. Another source is the booklet Starting a Healthy Family: Choosing Parenthood. It includes 9 first-person accounts by parents and one by a childfree couple. Seven of the ten case studies are available on tape (4 cassettes). (Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160).

3) Panel Discussion: Invite one or two parents and one or two childfree people to talk to your group about their life-styles and experiences. If you consider your own friends and acquaintances, you may think of several people who would be willing to address the group and answer questions. Provide participants with a brief outline of several areas you'd like them to discuss.

4) Films: Show a film about parents and one about childfree people. "You Can't Mean Not Ever" centers around how one childfree couple reacts to social pressures to have a child and discusses the childfree lifestyle. "New Relations," "Adapting to Parenthood," and several others focus on feelings of parents. All of these films are listed in Appendix B, the Resource List.

CASE STUDY
ACTIVITY #4: FAMILIES: WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN

CHILDFREE PEOPLE: Jeanne and David Lara

"I had a strong feeling that I didn't want to be a parent," recalls Jeanne Lara as she looks back at a decision to be childfree which she and her husband David made in 1975. They had been married about five years at the time, and David remembers that they felt "happy the way we were."

Their discussion about the possibility of being childfree was triggered by Jeanne's desire to stop using birth control pills. They spent several months discussing their feelings about parenthood, career interests, their relationship, and personal goals and decided that they did not want to be parents. The birth control dilemma was resolved when David decided to get a vasectomy.

Before this final step, the Laras had considered many factors involved in their decision and, in David's words, asked themselves, "Could we spend enough time if we had kids?" -- the time it takes to be good parents. David was open to the possibility of parenthood if Jeanne decided to go that route. He felt the need for more information about being childfree, but could not find helpful resources in the library. Jeanne felt strongly that she did not want to go through the struggle she had witnessed in the lives of her two sisters. Both sisters had married at age 18 and had children immediately. Jeanne's mother had also had a difficult time as a single parent trying to support her children.

Like her sisters, Jeanne married at age 18 and "probably would have gone along with the pattern -- get married, have kids" -- if David, who was six years older than she, had not insisted on waiting before deciding to have children. Waiting gave Jeanne the chance to establish a career interest in the travel business and to make up her own mind about having a child. When she confronted her feelings about not wanting to be a parent, she found an ally in a friend who felt the same way. That gave her the courage to "go against conditioning" and set her own course, a different one from the one chosen by her sisters.

Jeanne notes that her sisters feel she is "taking the easy way out." Jeanne agrees that she does not want the "responsibilities or headaches" of parenthood, but she does enjoy activities with her nieces -- go to Disneyland, bake cookies, put on makeup -- without the 24-hour-a-day demand of parenthood.

Jeanne's mother and co-workers are supportive of her decision to be childfree. Jeanne advanced from being a travel agent to a flight attendant and finds that her colleagues are "very independent women." David has discussed his decision with his sister and has found tacit approval from his parents who do not openly raise the subject.

David has not experienced the support Jeanne feels from co-workers. He is a police officer for Los Angeles County and finds that people make frequent references to his not having children. Other people imagine that he has lots of money to spend because he is not supporting children and he senses that they are somewhat jealous of his freedom. Fellow officers sometimes

assume, "David can work overtime -- he doesn't have any kids, he doesn't have to get home." David noted that he was expected "to go in first" when he and another officer were investigating situations or serving warrants. After he noticed this pattern developing, he talked with his supervisor and worked out a fair policy of deciding the "Who goes in?" question based on case assignment.

David has challenged the pronatalistic "family" insurance premium which he pays for health care. His efforts have not been successful. He reports that the response is, "A lot of things in life are unfair," or "You, of all people, should complain."

Like Jeanne, David also enjoys activities with children. He likes to take his nephews to sporting events and hopes that they develop a balanced perspective on sports -- "Have a good time...but there are other things in life." David speculates that he would be the one caring for a child if he and Jeanne had decided for parenthood because of her schedule of out-of-town travel. He was a Big Brother for two children over an eight year period and he and Jeanne work with a youth group at church. He feels that his decision to be childfree does not rule out relationships with children. "There are always opportunities to be with kids."

David enjoys discussing future choices and career possibilities with his nephews, church youth, and young people at work. Without advocating that they should not have children, he encourages them to consider the alternative "or even the idea of planning their children." He believes that it is important to "spend some time together as a couple." Jeanne agrees that waiting is very important before taking the important step of becoming a parent.

Both Jeanne and David are happy with their decision to be childfree. For them, choosing not to be parents meant a positive choice towards fulfilling other life possibilities. As a flight attendant and a police officer, they feel that they would have had a difficult time managing unusual work schedules and the demands of parenthood. Jeanne was glad that she "went full steam ahead and did not have to worry" about career/child conflicts. David thinks that being childfree helped in "educational pursuits." He spent eight years in evening courses at college and graduate school, following an interest in liberal arts.

He and Jeanne have both taken advantage of Jeanne's travel discounts to travel whenever they could. Jeanne states that knowing different cultures and being familiar with different places gives her a sense of "incredible security." Jeanne plans to gradually ease out of the demanding schedule of a flight attendant and take a job in the word processing division of an airline. She plans to stay in the travel business, which she enjoys.

David has developed a specialty in the field of insurance fraud investigation. He can retire if he chooses in five years and pursue a new direction. Although he has not decided what his next move will be, he is considering using his special skills to work for an insurance company or he might try teaching college. As a childfree person, he is glad that he does not feel compelled to work for the police force for 25 years, until the kids leave home.

#5 Decisions About Time

PURPOSE

One objective of this activity is to encourage students to become aware of how they spend time. A second objective is to help them realize how much time it takes to care for a child. After completing the activity, students will understand how caring for a child would change the way they spend time. They will begin to realize the difficult choices parents must make in order to balance the demands of a dependent child with their own personal needs and interests. They will also begin to see the meaning behind a reason some childfree people state for being childfree -- they do not want to assume full-time responsibility for a child.

ACTIVITY

Individual Assignment: In the last ten minutes of a group session, distribute copies of the worksheet included with this activity or write the questions on the chalkboard for students to copy. Ask the students to answer Questions #1 and 2 immediately and take the others home to answer at the end of one day. The assignment will be to keep track of how time is spent on one typical weekday. Students will share this information at the next session with a small group.

Alternate Method: If you would like to use a single time period, ask students to estimate how much time they spend on each type of activity listed on the worksheet. You can help them visualize their day by drawing a pie diagram with sections marked off.

Group Activity: Students bring their assignments to the next session. Explain that the purpose of this session will be to figure out how much time it takes to care for a baby and to compare this to the ways students now spend their time. Ask students to think of all the activities someone would do in one day of caring for a three-month old infant. The list should include at least the following: feeding, diapering, bathing, holding, playing, doing laundry, cooking and cleaning up. If students leave out essential tasks, suggest that they be added to the list. Write the list on the chalkboard or on newsprint.

Next, help the group to come up with an estimate of how many hours or minutes a person would spend doing each of these. Assume for the purpose of the exercise that the person has no help. Ask students the following questions to help them make realistic estimates:

--How many hours do you think a baby sleeps?
--How many hours would you spend feeding a baby, if the baby nurses for 30 minutes every 2 hours during the day?
--How long does it take to change a baby's diaper? How many total hours would you spend diapering if you change a baby every 2 hours during the day?
--How long does it take to bathe a baby? To wash and dry a load of clothes?

Generate similar questions for other activities on the list.

Figure out a total of the hours of child care and a total for the hours which would be left in the day. Discuss whether or not the total hours would be different in caring for different ages of children. How would hours vary for a parent working outside the home or attending school? For a single parent?

Small Groups: For the second part of the session, divide the group into small groups. Ask students to share the results of the assignment. The small group should discuss the following information: Would you have time to do all the activities you now do and still spend time caring for an infant? Would you have to drop any activities? Which ones would you choose to drop?

DISCUSSION

After the small group discussion is completed, re-assemble the group and ask the students to share their feelings about how much time it takes to care for a child. How do they feel about being a parent now? In the future? How would they find time to have fun, go to school, work outside the home, etc., and care for a child? How important is it for them to have the time to be alone, to be with friends, to go places, or do things which cannot include a child? How would they feel about the 24-hour a day responsibility? The loss of privacy? What would make parenthood worth the time? Stress that individual people feel differently about how they want to spend time and that feelings change from time to time as people change.

Expanding the Activity: Watch one of the films about parents listed in Appendix B, the Resource List. Discuss the time demands parents face.

#6 Decisions About Money

PURPOSE

The purpose of this activity is to give students an introduction to home budgeting. The students will investigate costs involved in raising a child and compare them to costs for a couple without children. Although economic costs are usually weighed against other factors in deciding whether or not to be a parent, they are an important consideration in the decision. They are also important in deciding about the timing of parenthood and the number of children desired.

By researching expenses for different ages of children and for a couple without children, students will become aware of family financial responsibilities. Their findings about expenses for children will be incorporated into projections about the overall cost of raising a child to age 18. Other activities in this guide explore intangible benefits of parenthood which are balanced against economic costs.

Expenses for families with and without children vary from family to family depending on how the family chooses to spend money. All home expenses vary from year to year due to inflation. The objective is to stimulate thinking about costs and not to arrive at exact figures.

ACTIVITY

Leader Preparation: You are undoubtedly familiar with your own personal or family expenses, but you may not be familiar with total cost estimates for rearing a child. You might be interested in learning about experts' projections of costs and in sharing this information with your group after students have completed their tasks.

Here is researcher Thomas J. Espenshade's[1] 1980 estimate for raising a child at a moderate income level:

Childbirth	$ 2,485
Cost to age 18	72,894
4 years of state college	9,784
TOTAL	$ 85,163

Espenshade points out that these are the direct costs of raising a child. An indirect cost would be the salary lost if one parent reduces or stops paid employment for several years to care for the child. This kind of cost is considered to be an "opportunity cost."

A teaching module by Leon Clark[2] is also available based on Espenshade's 1975 figures. It helps students explore costs, and compare their own values about children to values held in a rural Filippino society where children make an economic contribution. The Bureau updates Espenshade's estimates for inflationary consideration at regular intervals.

Refer to Redbook[3] and Parents[4] magazines for estimated costs of parenthood. Other information sources are Sylvia Porter's Money Book[4] and local extension offices of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Student Tasks: Give each student one of the five worksheets on the following pages and ask them to complete the worksheet within a week. Students will bring the worksheets to the group and share their findings with the other students who were assigned the same task. The five worksheets will help students figure:

1) A one-month budget for a couple without children
2) Medical costs of having a baby
3) Initial expenses for an infant
4) A one-month budget for a toddler
5) A one-month budget for a school-age child

If you think that all five tasks are too much for your group to handle at one time, you could limit the activity to worksheets #1-3. Sharing information from these three would give the group a picture of the expenses a couple would immediately face if they chose to have a baby. You could explore overall costs for raising a child during a subsequent group session.

Alternate Method: If you wish to do this activity without assigning "homework," the task groups could work together during the group period to estimate the expenses listed on the worksheets. You could supply research materials: store catalogues, newspaper ads for food and clothing, and pamphlets from insurance companies or hospitals which give medical costs. The group would write out its estimates and share them with the total group. Students would lose the benefit of outside research, but they would be challenged to think about costs.

DISCUSSION

Divide the group into five task groups according to the worksheets they completed. Each group should compare notes and arrive at a group estimate for the worksheet total. They can do this by adding together each person's total and dividing by the total number in the group.

After the task groups complete their work, re-assemble the total group. Write the average figure for each worksheet category on the chalkboard or newsprint.

To show the effect a new baby would have on a couple's expenses, add together the medical costs and expenses for a new baby (worksheets #2 and 3). The couple would need to earn or save enough money to meet all the medical expenses not covered by their insurance. They would need items not included on the 3 month worksheet to meet a baby's needs in the first year. Try projecting a total for the first year based on worksheet #3.

You might also try projecting the total cost of raising a child to age 18 by using the following method:

1) Add the medical expenses plus the first year cost.
2) Multiply the toddler budget by 12 months.
3) Multiply the school-age budget by 12 months by 16 years.
4) Add the totals of steps 1,2, and 3.

How does the group's estimate compare to Espenshade's estimate? Ask students to criticize your estimate. For example: It does not take inflation into account; children's expenses will vary at different ages; the worksheets did not allow for all ordinary costs or special costs (medical problems, special lessons, etc.)

To make the costs meaningful to students, divide the average total figured by each task group by the current minimum wage. This will show how many hours of work would be needed to meet these expenses.

Ask students to think about how much they would need to earn to support themselves at a standard of living acceptable to them. How much would they need to support themselves and a child? If some of your students are from low-income families, you might wish to relate the discussion to current public assistance payments and Medicaid coverage in your state.

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[1]Thomas J. Espenshade, "Raising a Child Can Now Cost $85,000" Intercom (September 1980), Population Reference Bureau, Inc., 1337 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D. C. 20036

[2]Leon Clark, "The Cost and Value of American Children," a Teaching Module, Population Reference Bureau, 1337 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

[3]Ruth Fairchild Pomeroy, "What Does It Cost To Have a Baby Today?" Redbook (July 1980) Discusses high and low estimates of medical, maternity wardrobe, food, clothing, diapers, nursery furnishings, and sitters. The article updates Redbook figures reported in 1976.

[4]Thomas Tilling, "Your $250,000 Baby," Parents (November 1980) Estimates total cost of raising a child born in 1980 to the age of 18. Accounts for hidden expenses and inflation.

[5]Sylvia Porter, Sylvia Porter's Money Book, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1975, revised 1980.

WORKSHEET #1
ACTIVITY #6: DECISIONS ABOUT MONEY

One-Month Budget for Couple Without Children

Pretend that you and your partner are figuring out a budget for the coming month. The following is a list of some things you will need. Fill in the amount of money for each item on the list and add up the total for the month. You can find out costs by:

--visiting grocery or clothing stores
--asking your parents
--looking at store catalogues or newspaper ads
--looking at apartment rental ads in newspaper

Food

Divide what your family spends at the grocery store each month by the number in your family to figure a food cost for one person.

$_____(cost for one) X 2 people = _____

Lunch

$_____per lunch X _____number of lunches both people buy in a month = _____

Housing

Apartment rent or house payment for one month _____

Utilities for one month (electric, gas, water, phone) _____

Clothing

1 shirt _____
1 blouse _____
1 pr. shoes _____

Transportation

Bus fare or gas to and from work: _____¢ per day X 20 days X ____ people _____

Personal Expenses and Entertainment

$_____ per month spending money X 2 people _____

Monthly amount for movies, concerts, etc. _____

TOTAL FOR MONTH _____

WORKSHEET #2
ACTIVITY #6: DECISIONS ABOUT MONEY

Medical Costs for New Baby

Pretend that you are expecting to have a baby. You need to figure out what some of the medical expenses will be. Fill in the amount of money for each item on the list. You can find out costs by:

- --calling a doctor, health clinic or hospital
- --asking a health insurance agent
- --asking your parents
- --looking at books or pamphlets in the library

Doctor's fee for check-ups and delivery	_____
Delivery and labor room fees	_____
3 days for hospital room (semi-private)	_____
Anesthesia (if you are put to sleep)	_____
Laboratory/pharmacy	_____
Examination of newborn	_____
Nursery fee for newborn (2 days)	_____
Six doctor visits with shots for baby (during the first year)	_____
TOTAL	_____

NOTE: Some of these costs might be covered by insurance if your policy includes maternity coverage.

WORKSHEET #3
ACTIVITY #6: DECISIONS ABOUT MONEY

Expenses for New Baby

Pretend that you are expecting to have a baby. You need to figure out what some of your expenses will be during the first 3 months. Fill in the amount of money for each item on the list and add up the total. You can find out costs by:

--visiting the infant department in a store
--looking at store catalogues, newspaper ads or library books
--asking your parents

Clothing

5 undershirts _____

5 gowns _____

5 stretch suits _____

2 receiving blankets _____

1 sweater _____

1 bunting sleeper _____

2 pr. booties _____

Diapers

4 dozen cloth diapers (washed at home) _____
or
1080 (3 mo. supply) disposable diapers (using 12 per day) _____

3 jars of powder or lotion _____

Baby's Furniture

Crib (with sheets and pads) _____

Stroller _____

Infant seat _____

Changing table _____

TOTAL _____

NOTE: This list does not cover food. If you bottle-feed the baby, you would buy milk or formula and bottles.

WORKSHEET #4
ACTIVITY #6: DECISIONS ABOUT MONEY

One-Month Budget for Toddler

Pretend that you are the parent of a one-year old child. You are figuring out a monthly budget (30 days) of how much you will need to spend on your baby. The following is a list of some items you will need for this coming month. Fill in the amount of money each item costs and add up the total for the month. You can find out costs by:

--visiting grocery or clothing stores
--asking your parents
--calling your doctor or health clinic
--looking at store catalogues, newspaper ads, or library books

Food

Milk (3 cups per day)

_____¢ per quart X 22 (for one month) _____

Baby Food

_____¢ for one jar of fruit X 30 days _____

_____¢ for one jar of meat X 30 days _____

_____¢ for one jar of vegetables X 30 days _____

Clothing

Disposable diapers (8 per day)

$_____ per box X _____ boxes for one month _____

1 pr. of shoes _____

3 jumpsuits for play ($____ for one X 3) _____

1 pr. of pajamas _____

Medical

One visit to pediatrician _____

One immunization _____

Transportation

Bus fare or gas to and from doctor for you and baby _____

Other bus fare or gas for _____ _____

TOTAL FOR MONTH _____

WORKSHEET #5
ACTIVITY #6: DECISIONS ABOUT MONEY

One-Month Budget for School-Age Child

Pretend that you are the parent of a ten-year old. You are figuring out a monthly budget (30 days) of how much you will need to spend on your child. The following is a list of some items you will need this coming month. Fill in the amount of money each item costs and add up the total for the month. You can find out costs by:

--visiting grocery and clothing stores
--asking your parents
--looking at store catalogues, newspaper ads, or library books

Food

Divide what your family spends at the grocery store each month by the number in your family to figure a food cost for one person _____

School lunch ____¢ per lunch X _____ days (for the number of days lunch is purchased) _____

Clothing

1 pr. of pants _____

1 T-shirt _____

1 pr. of shoes _____

Educational

2 notebooks and one pen _____

Bus fare for one field trip _____

Transportation

Bus fare to and from school: _____¢ per day X 20 _____

Allowance

$_____per week X 4 weeks _____

TOTAL FOR MONTH _____

#7 Conversing With a Child

PURPOSE

This activity is designed to give students an experience of communicating with a child and the opportunity to reflect on that experience. They will think about what it is like to talk with a child and compare this interaction with peer interaction. They will share insights about the process of communicating with children.

Activities #8, 9, and 10 supplement this one by offering students other experiences designed to increase their knowledge about children. Knowledge and exposure to children are important ingredients in the parenthood/child-free choice. Activities #7-10 could complement a basic child development course.

Task Assignment: Assign students the task of talking with a child and reporting back on the experience. Students should select children they know, who are at least five years younger than themselves and who are not brothers or sisters. Possibilities include talking with a neighbor, niece, nephew, cousin, or sibling of a friend. The time can be arranged in advance or can occur in a casual fashion. Students should choose a time when they can talk to a child alone and spend at least 20 minutes with the child. They will be asked to share with the group insights gained from the experience.

Ask students to decide if they will be talking with a pre-school or a school-age child. Give each student one of the worksheets on the following pages. The worksheets offer suggestions for talking with pre-school and school-age children and they include a list of questions to think about and to share during small group discussion.

DISCUSSION

After students have completed their tasks, they bring their worksheets to the group session. Divide the group into small groups and ask them to compare notes about talking to different ages of children, using the worksheet questions as a basis for discussion.

At the end of the period, re-assemble the group. Ask students, "What did you learn about children that you did not know before the exercise?"

WORKSHEET #1
ACTIVITY #7: CONVERSING WITH A CHILD

Talking with a Pre-school Child

(Ages 3-5)

All children are different in their ability to talk. Between the ages of 3 and 5, children grow very quickly in their language skills. The child you choose to talk with may or may not be a "talker." Choose a child you think will feel comfortable talking with you.

It may help to bring a toy or book to help get the conversation started. Some pre-school children have difficulty talking about past events. Try to tie your first question in with concrete activities of a typical day. Examples:

1. What did you do after your nap today?
2. I see you have a _____ (name a toy). What do you do with it?
3. Who do you like to play with?
4. What do you like to do when you go outside?

Try not to fall into a pattern of yes-no answers. Ask questions that a child could answer in many different ways. Note how the child answers, keeping in mind that pre-school children do not always understand fully what is asked. Some children give answers that do not make sense to an adult but that do make sense from their own experiences. Other children sound almost like adults when they talk and are willing to talk about all kinds of topics.

After you have talked with the child, think about the following questions and jot down your thoughts on the back of this paper.

1. Was the experience enjoyable? Why or why not?
2. How did the child respond to you? Friendly? Quiet or shy?
3. What are the differences between talking with a child and talking with someone your own age?
4. Would you enjoy talking with a child throughout a whole day?

WORKSHEET #2
ACTIVITY #7: CONVERSING WITH A CHILD

Talking with a School-Age Child

All children have different interests and abilities. The child you choose to talk with may or may not be a "talker." Choose a child you think will feel comfortable talking with you.

Here are a few topics to help start the conversation. Be sure to consider the child's special interests and use your own ideas.

1. What the child did after school today
2. The child's favorite TV show, sports hero, comic book, etc.
3. The child's friends
4. Places he or she has visited
5. Brothers or sisters (if any)

After you have talked with the child, think about the following questions and jot down your thoughts on the back of this paper.

1. Was the experience enjoyable? Why or why not?
2. How did the child respond to you? Friendly? Quiet or shy?
3. What are the differences between talking with a child and talking with someone your own age?
4. Would you enjoy talking with a child throughout a whole day?

#8 Doing an Activity With a Child

PURPOSE

During this activity, students will play a teaching/guiding role with a child and observe how a child reacts. The activity offers a concrete experience in learning about child development and an opportunity to reflect on one of the roles a parent plays.

ACTIVITY

The two worksheets which go with this activity outline how to read a book to a pre-school child and how to play a game with a school-age child. Ask students to decide if they would like to do an activity with a school-age or a pre-school child. Give each student one of the worksheets and answer questions about the assignment. Explain that they should answer the questions on the worksheet and bring it to the next session. They may do the activity with any child they know who is at least five years younger -- neighbor, niece, nephew, cousin. Explain that the students will be playing a teaching or helping role with the child for a thirty-minute time period.

Alternate Activities: If you would like to offer students a choice of activities to do, here are some ideas of ordinary activities which might be part of a typical week.

For the Pre-School Child

1. Play with toy cars and trucks with a child.
2. Take a child for a walk in your neighborhood.
3. Play with building blocks or a toy which has pieces that fit together.
4. Watch a child draw a picture and ask the child to tell you about it. (Avoid saying "What is it?" because children cannot always label their pictures).
5. Play with a child, using a doll or set of small people.

For the School-Age Child

1. Play an outdoor game which the child enjoys playing.
2. Go with the child for a walk around the neighborhood.
3. Take the child on a trip to the library or read a favorite book to the child.
4. Watch a TV show together and talk about it.

DISCUSSION

Students should note their responses in writing on the worksheet. Divide the group into discussion groups of those who did the school-age activity and those who did the pre-school activity. The groups will share responses to the discussion questions for 30 minutes. The whole group can then spend time comparing the differences among playing with children of different ages. What did they learn about children from doing this activity?

WORKSHEET #1
ACTIVITY #8: DOING AN ACTIVITY WITH A CHILD

Activity with a Pre-School Child

Guidelines for reading a book to a young child (ages 2-6)

--Get approval ahead of time from the child's parent (if you do not usually play with the child).
--Find out if the child has books at home. If not, stop by a library and ask the children's librarian to help you select 3-4 books appropriate for the child's age.
--Allow the child to select which book to read. (Some children will not understand the idea of choosing one and you will have to help.)
--Sit next to the child so that the child can see the pictures and words on the pages.
--Allow the child a chance to talk about the pictures or story or ask questions.
--Repeat the story if the child would like it read again. Decide for yourself how many times you will read it and tell your limit to the child.

Student Response: Activity with a Child

1. How did the child respond during your activity (interested, excited, bored, etc.?) _____

_____

2. Did you enjoy doing the activity? Why or why not? _____

_____

3. Did the child say or do anything which surprised you? Describe what happened.

_____

4. Did the child seem to understand the activity? Explain. _____

_____

5. What did you have to explain to the child? Was it easy or difficult for you to do? _____

_____

6. Would you choose to do this activity again? Why or why not? _____

_____

7. What did you learn about children from doing this activity? _____

_____

WORKSHEET #2
ACTIVITY #8: DOING AN ACTIVITY WITH A CHILD

Activity with a School-Age Child

Guidelines for playing a board game with a child

--Get approval ahead of time from the child's parent (if you do not usually play with the child).
--Find out if the child has games at home. If not, bring two easy games of your own or borrow two from a friend. (Examples: Candyland, Sorry, Trouble, checkers, Chutes and Ladders)
--Allow the child to select which game to play. (If the game seems too difficult, try it anyway and see how the child responds.)
--Explain the rules to the child as simply and clearly as you can. Let the child explain the rules to you if he/she already knows them.
--Decide for yourself how you will play the game. If you are a better player than the child, what will you do? Will you let the child win? Why or why not?
--If the child does not understand the rules, you may have to change the rules of the game to make it easier to play. You will have to think of your own way to do this or suggest that the child choose a different game to play.
--Think about how you should respond if the child gets angry or frustrated during the game? What would you do if you were the parent?

Student Response: Activity with Child

1. How did the child respond during your activity (interested, excited, bored, etc?) _____

_____

2. Did you enjoy doing the activity? Why or why not? _____

_____

3. Did the child say or do anything which surprised you? Describe what happened.

_____

4. Did the child seem to understand the activity? Explain. _____

_____

5. What did you have to explain to the child? Was it easy or difficult for you to do? _____

_____

6. Would you choose to do this activity again? Why or why not? _____

_____

7. What did you learn about children from doing this activity? _____

_____

#9 Observing at a Child Care Center

PURPOSE

This activity offers students the opportunity to build on their experiences in Activities #7 and 8 of talking and playing with a child by observing children in a group setting. Child care workers fill a role that is similar to the parent role but not identical. This experience will help students see a wide range of individual differences among children.

ACTIVITY

You will need to contact the directors of several child care centers in your community in advance to ask permission for your students to observe the program for one hour. Explain the purpose of the activity and ask the director to indicate the most convenient times for observations. The director should also tell you how many students could come during a given time. Most centers are open to visitors. Centers which are associated with universities and high school vocational child care classes are specifically set up to accommodate observers.

Make a sign-up sheet for students, noting the name of the center, location, and time slots available. Pass around the sheet for students to sign. Arrange for the students to share transportation. Call each center director and confirm the date, time, and names of students who will be visiting.

Before students visit the center, go over the observation guidelines on the instruction sheet and answer questions. Stress that the students will be guests of the center. After their visits, they will fill out the response form and bring it to the session designated for discussion.

DISCUSSION

After all students have completed their observations, ask them to bring their worksheet to a group session. Ask students to share their experiences for 15-20 minutes in a small group. Re-assemble the group and discuss a typical child's day at a center. See if the students can re-construct a whole day from arrival at 7:30 A.M. to departure at 5:30 P.M. Include times for indoor and outdoor play, snack, lunch, nap, and learning experiences. What other activities make up the day? E.g., going to the bathroom, putting on coats, changing clothes, blowing noses. How is a child care center like a school and a home? How do parents share the child's experience at the center? How is the center different from home?

WORKSHEET
ACTIVITY #9: OBSERVING AT A CHILD CARE CENTER

Guidelines for Observing at Child Care Center

You are a guest of the center. Make sure that you arrive and leave at the times for which you signed up. Your role is to watch the children in the group or room which the director assigns you to. Feel free to talk or play with a child who approaches you as long as you don't interrupt a group activity. Ask a staff person for advice if you are unsure about what you should be doing.

Centers usually schedule "free choice" periods during which children do various activities. If you have difficulty watching a whole group doing several things at the same time, focus on one child or one group playing together.

Your Observations

1. How old were the children you observed? _____

2. How active were the children? Was the room quiet or noisy? _____

   _____

3. What differences did you notice among the children? (quiet, active, friendly or shy) Describe. _____

   _____

4. Did you play or talk with any of the children? Describe. _____

   _____

5. What did the child care staff person do with the children? _____

   _____

6. Did the children seem to know what was expected of them? _____

   _____

7. How would you describe what the children were doing? Playing? Learning? A combination of both? _____

   _____

8. Did you observe any parents picking up or dropping off a child during your visit? _____ Describe how the child reacted _____
   How the parent reacted _____

9. How would you feel if you spent eight hours working at this center? _____

   _____

10. What did you learn about yourself during this visit? _____

    _____

#10 What Would You Do If You Were the Parent?

PURPOSE

This activity gives students the opportunity to decide how they would handle typical problems which arise in caring for a child. It's a way of "trying-out" the parent role.

ACTIVITY

Divide students into 5 small groups and assign each group one of the five sample problems from the worksheet. They represent typical problems; you could add others.

One member of the group will read the problem situation. Each member then gives a quick response to the question " What would you do if you were the parent?" The group discusses various solutions, reaches a consensus on the best solution, and reports back to the whole group.

DISCUSSION

The way students solve the problems will depend on their own opinions about how parents should guide children's actions. Should parents lay down rules and stick by them no matter what? Should parents try to figure out why children act the way they do? Should parents interfere when a child has trouble with a friend? What about when a child has a problem at school? What happens when the parents' needs and the child's needs come into conflict? There are not any easy answers to the above questions. It is important to begin to think about how to handle the dilemmas of parenthood before making a decision about becoming a parent.

WORKSHEET
ACTIVITY #10: WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE THE PARENT?

Problem #1

Maria's mother looks out the window and is surprised to see that the family car is not parked on the street. Five minutes later, the car pulls up and sixteen-year-old Maria is at the wheel. Maria has just received her license to drive and she is supposed to ask her parents' permission before she uses the car. Maria's mother knows how important it is to Maria to be able to drive, but she is bothered because this is the second time Maria has used the car without asking. What would you do if you were Maria's mom?

Problem #2

Jacob, at age 4, is playing with his friend Angela, age 5. They are sitting by the TV set, building roads with Jacob's blocks. Angela has brought over four small trucks to roll over the roads.

They have been quietly playing for half an hour. Suddenly, Jacob's father hears Angela yell, "I'm going to take my trucks and go home!" He hears the sound of blocks being kicked around and goes into the room to see what is happening. What would you do if you were Jacob's father?

ACTIVITY #10: WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE THE PARENT?

Problem #3

Ten-year-old Billy is taking a long time getting ready for school one day. Billy's mother goes to his room to see what is keeping him. She finds Billy lying on his bed with his school clothes on. He has one hand on his forehead and a sad look on his face. When his mother leans over him, Billy says, "Mom, I don't feel good. I'm getting tired of going to school every day and seeing dumb old Ms. Brown."

Billy's mother can tell that he is upset but he does not seem to be really sick. She glances at her watch and realizes that she has to leave for work in a little while. What would you do if you were Billy's mother?

Problem #4

Michelle, age two, and her mother and father are eating supper. Michelle has learned how to use a spoon to eat but she still needs a lot of practice. Tonight, Michelle has decided that she does not want to eat her mashed potatoes. Both her mother and father are urging her to try a bite. Michelle is feeling restless. She wants to get down from the table. Suddenly, she starts pounding on her potatoes with her spoon. A lump of potato lands right in her father's lap. What would you do if you were Michelle's father?

Problem #5

Tony's mother has just arrived home from work. As she walks into the kitchen, she notices that the supper is not cooking on the stove. Tony's mother frowns. She had told Tony to start cooking the rice when he got home from school. Just then, Tony comes in with a friend and says, "Hi, Mom!" What would you do if you were Tony's mother?

#11 Reasons for and Against Being a Parent

PURPOSE

This activity will help students explore the advantages and disadvantages of being a parent. The decision to have or not to have a child is a very personal one; one person's reason for having a child could be another person's reason against having a child.

Ways of helping students begin to sort out the pros and cons of parenthood are outlined in this activity and in #12 and #13. #14 focuses specifically on teenage parenthood.

This activity complements #15, "Reasons for and Against Being a Childfree Person." The decision to be childfree is more than a rejection of parenthood. It is a positive decision "for" other life options. If you do not use #15 as a separate activity, you should call this activity "Reasons for Parenthood and Reasons for being Childfree." Include the reasons in #15 in this activity.

ACTIVITY

This version of the activity is designed for a group which has not had much opportunity to talk about or discuss responsibilities of parenthood.

Copy the following worksheet of reasons for and against being a parent on to 30 index cards, one reason per card. Or, photocopy the pages and cut and paste the reasons on to index cards. If the group has fewer than 30 members, make duplicate cards or generate additional reasons for and against. The fifteen reasons listed are by no means exhaustive. They are based on a clinical tool called "Optional Parenthood Questionnaire" designed to be an aid to couples and individuals making the parenthood decision.[1]

Divide the group into two sections, A+B. Give Section A cards which have reasons for being a parent written on them. Give Section B cards with reasons against being a parent. Ask the students to spend five minutes thinking about reasons why some individuals might not agree with the statement on the card. For the purposes of this activity, ask students to set aside personal opinions and feel free to put themselves in another person's position. Explain that personal opinions will be discussed at the end of the activity. Ask them to write down one or more reasons which disagree with the one on the card.

Next, ask the students to pair off according to the numbers on their cards. The students with cards #1A and #1B will sit together, #2A with #2B, etc. The pairs will exchange cards and compare notes on reasons for and against being a parent. They will spend ten minutes developing a combined list of all the reasons they can think of for and against being a parent and will share these with the group.

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[1] Lee Roy Beach, Brenda Townes, et.al., "The Optional Parenthood Questionnaire: A Guide to Decision-Making about Parenthood." Washington, D.C. NAOP, 1978.

Alternate Method: This version is designed for a group which has been exposed to some of the responsibilities of parenthood in other courses or course units. The group should be comfortable with group discussion about feelings.

Ask each student to spend a few minutes thinking about what it would be like to be a parent. After they have pictures in mind, ask them to mark off two columns on a sheet of paper. On one side they will list all the reasons they can think of for being a parent. On the other side, they will list all the reasons against. They should think of all possible reasons, not just ones they agree with. Allow 5-10 minutes for completion of this exercise.

DISCUSSION

When the students have completed their lists (either as individuals or pairs), ask them to share their reasons with the group. Write down the reasons on newsprint or on the chalkboard. After reasons have been listed, ask the students if they agree or disagree with any of the reasons listed and why. Did the students hear reasons for or against being a parent that they had never thought about before? What were some of those? What are their personal opinions about specific issues? What do they feel are the most important reasons to consider? Do they think reasons might change as a person gets older? Do they think that most people think about all these reasons before they have a child? Why or why not? Do they think people should explore their reasons before having a child? Why or why not?

Expanding the Activity: The same type of brainstorming and discussion of reasons can be done to examine the pros and cons of various sizes of families. Discuss in turn: the family with no child, one child, with two children, with three or more. The advantages and disadvantages can be discussed from the point of view of both the adult and the child family members. In conducting this discussion, you must help students accept the different family backgrounds of group members. Judgments about right and wrong kinds of families should be avoided in favor of respect for individual differences in feelings and experiences.[2]

[2]Activity suggested by Martha Roper, high school teacher, St. Louis, MO.

WORKSHEET
ACTIVITY #11: REASONS FOR AND AGAINST BEING A PARENT

SECTION A
For Being a Parent

1A. Some women really enjoy the changes in their bodies during pregnancy.

2A. Some people believe that having a child would help them grow and mature.

3A. Some people feel that having a child would make them a total person.

4A. Some people feel that having a child would help them in work or school because it would improve their understanding of people.

5A. Some people enjoy caring for children and having someone little depend on them.

6A. Some people enjoy teaching children and helping them learn about the world.

7A. Some people like to re-live their own childhood by going places with a child.

8A. Some people think that a child would take care of them in old age.

9A. Some people feel that it's worth it to spend money on raising a child.

10A. Some people enjoy living around other families with children and getting to know other parents.

11A. Some people feel that having a child would increase the closeness they feel with their partners.

12A. Some people feel that they should have a child when they are young.

13A. Some people feel that the world is a good place. They want to raise a child who might contribute to the world in the future.

14A. Some people feel that having a child would bring them closer to their parents and help carry on family traditions.

15A. Some people feel that having a child would bring them closer to friends who are having children.

SECTION B
Against Being a Parent

1B. Some women feel sick during pregnancy or feel that they are fat and ugly.

2B. Some people feel that they would miss out on other growth experiences because they would be confined by a child.

3B. Some people feel that they would not need a child to feel like a whole person.

4B. Some people feel that a child would keep them from finishing school or following a career.

5B. Some people are bored by children and feel that caring for a child would interfere with spending time doing other things.

6B. Some people don't have the patience to teach children and are not interested in activities children like.

7B. Some people don't like to take a child along wherever they go.

8B. Some people do not think they should depend on a child caring for them in old age.

9B. Some people feel that it costs too much to raise a child and they would rather spend money in other ways.

10B. Some people prefer living in an adult neighborhood.

11B. Some people feel that caring for a child would mean having less time to spend with their partners. A child could come between two people.

12B. Some people feel that they are too young to have a child.

13B. Some people worry about bringing a child into a world that has so many problems and they are worried about the future.

14B. Some people don't think that having a child will bring them closer to their parents. Some are not concerned about carrying on family traditions.

15B. Some people feel that they would be left out of friends' activities if they have a child.

#12 Role Play: Am I Parent Material?

PURPOSE

This activity will help students examine the qualities needed to be a parent by treating the parent role as a job for which students are applying. It will help students think about what background and abilities they think parents should have. They will begin to answer the question "Am I Parent Material?" on a personal level by thinking about what the general job of being a parent requires.

ACTIVITY

Set the scene for the role play by explaining that everyone will have the opportunity to play two different roles: 1) people who want to be employed in the job of parent and 2) employers conducting the job interview. Ask all students to spend fifteen minutes reviewing the questions in the pamphlet "Am I Parent Material?"[1] to prepare for the interview. They should circle the questions they think are the most important ones in qualifying for the job of parent and decide how they would answer. After they have studied the pamphlets, divide the group into job seekers and employers.

Students then pair off and conduct the job interviews during a 20-minute time period. The employer asks the job seeker to answer the questions from the pamphlet the employer thinks are most important. The job seeker either answers or "passes" on the questions. The roles are then reversed.

DISCUSSION

The whole group re-assembles and students discuss reactions to the activity. What questions were the ones most students thought were most important for the job of parent? Ask students if they think most people think about these questions before becoming parents. Why or why not? Do they think most people should think about these questions? Why or why not?

Alternate Activities: 1) Ask each student to write down the questions from the pamphlet which they think are most important. They will use these to interview a person outside of the group. Later, students report back to the group on the responses they received. This could also be done as a group project with the students devising a survey form together and analyzing the compiled results from the interviews.

2) Print some of the questions from the pamphlet on slips of paper and place them inside a box labeled "Am I Parent Material?" After a group discussion of parental responsibilities, students volunteer to select a question and discuss their answers. They are free to pass up any question they do not wish to answer. To reduce the stress of answering in front of the group, students could be divided into pairs and take turns passing the box of questions from pair to pair.[2]

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[1] National Alliance for Optional Parenthood, "Am I Parent Material?" Available in Spanish. Bulk rates. 1977.

[2] Both alternate activities suggested by Anne J. Freeman, Myrtle Grove Instructional Center, Pensacola, FL

#13 The Parent Job Description

PURPOSE

Activity #12 dealt with overall qualifications for parenthood. This activity will help students generate a "parent job description" -- a list of all the tasks a parent should do to help a child grow and develop. Students will examine four of the roles all parents need to play and will begin to understand the complexities of being a parent.

ACTIVITY

Divide the group into four task groups. Ask each group to generate a list of some of the tasks that a parent should do to meet one of the four kinds of needs listed below. Explain unfamiliar terms and give examples of the needs.

1. Caregiver: (Physical needs) -- What should a parent do to care for the physical needs of a child? E.g., dress the child, bathe the child.

2. Supporter: (Emotional needs) -- What should a parent do to help a child feel good about himself or herself? E.g., hug the child, praise the child.

3. Guider: (Social needs) -- What should a parent do to help a child learn how to get along with other people? E.g., let the child bring friends home.

4. Teacher: (Intellectual needs) -- What should a parent do to help a child learn what he or she needs to know? E.g., read books to the child.

A group recorder will write down the list of tasks on a large piece of newsprint under the headings caregiver, supporter, guider, or teacher.

DISCUSSION

Re-assemble the whole group and give students the opportunity to read through the lists from all four groups and react. Should anything be added to the lists? Can parents really do everything that is listed? What could be eliminated? Why? Why not? Is there such a thing as a "perfect parent?" If parents can't be perfect, what are the most important parts of their job? Are parents always to blame if a child has problems? What are some responsibilities a child should have in a family?

#14 What Is It Like To Be a Teenage Parent?

PURPOSE

This activity will help students think about the consequences of becoming a parent at an early age. Since students themselves or their friends could be parents, group discussion should be non-judgmental in tone. You should present sequences as changes a young parent experiences which will be viewed in a negative way by some people and in a positive way by others. The concept of trade-offs should be explained -- that making one choice may eliminate or change other available choices.

ACTIVITY

Use the following essays written by teenage parents as the basis for group discussion. You could 1) Duplicate the essays printed on the following pages and distribute copies to the group; 2) Read the stories aloud to the group; or 3) Ask two teens to tape-record the essays and play them for the group.

Alternate Method: Use one of the films about teenage parenthood listed in Appendix B, the Resource List, as the basis for group discussion. The list includes: "We Were Just Too Young" (28 minutes), "Teenage Father" (30 minutes), "Lucy: A Teenage Pregnancy" (10 minutes), and "Wayne's Decision" (7 minute trigger film).

DISCUSSION

Questions: Select several of these questions to guide group discussion after the story/film.

-- Did the person in the story/film make a decision to be a parent before the girl got pregnant?
-- What did the person think about before deciding? Why did he/she want to have a child? Not want to have a child?
-- What other choices did he/she have?
-- What changes did the person make in her/his life in becoming a parent?
-- What satisfactions did the person feel about parenthood? What regrets?
-- What would the person have done differently if he/she could choose again?
-- What would you have done if you were in this person's situation?
-- What do you think will happen in the person's future?
-- Do you think this story or film is realistic? Why or why not?
-- What are some things a teen should think about before becoming a parent?

Discussion Starters (less structured than the above questions): Ask students to quickly write their reaction to the story by completing the following sentences:

1. The thing I'll remember most about this story is...
2. Parenthood in this story was...
3. The story made me feel...

Students could share responses in small groups.

ACTIVITY #14: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A TEENAGE PARENT?

I'm Not His Babysitter, I'm His Mother

by Ann Staven

Now you are going to hear some of the biggest problems that not only I, but most teenage parents, have. I hope you read this article and understand how hard it is to be a teen parent. I wish that information on contraception had been in the open like it is today when I got pregnant, so I could have at least looked into it to see the different ways to handle my situation better.

I was very lucky to have an understanding mother because four months before we found out I was pregnant my dad had died and my mom really needed me and I needed her. In a way it was a life for a life.

I love my mom and always will. I only wish I could have been her little angel, but in a way my son has changed my life for the better. I am no longer out all night raising hell and getting in trouble with the police.

I am seventeen years old, and I have a baby boy two years old. I was fourteen when I had my baby. It was hard for a while to actually believe he was my own flesh and blood and that I was his mother.

At the end of the day I couldn't give him to someone to take home with them because I'm not his babysitter I'm his mother. At night he would wake up at 2:00 A.M. I felt like yelling at him to shut up and let me sleep. At times I did, but that only made him upset even more.

When morning came around he was up at 6:30, 7:00 A.M. and after a tiring night I just wasn't up to getting out of bed to tend to him. I'd let him lie there for about five minutes crying. After that I would get up, change him, feed him, dress him and put him back to sleep. Then I'd get ready for school at Teenage Parents Program. Finally at school I would leave him in the nursery in very good hands, of course, and go to class.

After school it was another routine of feeding him, changing diapers, putting him to bed for two hours and then doing homework and housework. You see it's hard to be his teenage mother since I'm not his babysitter.

There is something more than being a baby's mother. You have to be his friend. I love my baby very much and I also think he's the best son any one could have. (Of course he's my baby.) Next to all the work I have to do as a mother, I have to show my son I love him more and more every day and how I do that is by teaching him how to do new things. I teach him to say new words, draw, help bake and cook, and how to count.

During the summer it was really fun to watch him splash in the pool, but there was a drawback which was that I couldn't go swimming in the big pool with my friends and play tag, because I could not leave him alone. Who knows what could happen to a baby in a pool of water?

Then on those lovely nights of summer all sorts of parties were going on. Where was I? Definitely not at a party. I was with my son all night, but later on my mom said that I could go out two nights a week because I was being deprived of my social life. I went out twice a week for two hours, but I really didn't have much fun because my baby was home waiting for me. I'd go home early to be with him and play with him to show him that I love him and that I am his best friend.

Now picture this. You're walking down the street and you hear someone behind you or across the street say or even holler, "There's one of those girls who'd put out to anyone. Look there's the girl I was telling you about. What a whore." Maybe they would say "hog." Just because I made one mistake doesn't mean I'm going to make the same mistake over again.

Another problem is the guys, they know that you have a baby, so they only want you for one thing. You can see how hard it is to trust a guy for a long time. Many girls look for a man for only one thing, and that is marriage and a father for their baby. Sometimes all they get is a broken heart because they find out that their dream man is a nightmare. In the end they become divorced. Now the girl has one more name to be called, a divorcee.

ESSAY #2, page 1
ACTIVITY #14: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A TEENAGE PARENT?

From a Teenage Mom

by Julie

I remember being pregnant at 15. The only thing on my mind was that I wanted to keep my "baby." Sure, babies are easy to care for, needing only feeding, changing and hugs, but now I have a 3-year old son, a roommate, and someone who needs respect. Unlike a baby, he needs to share most of the decisions concerning him. When I have to be at a meeting or to a class, my son must be interested in going to daycare then, too.

Performing the tasks of a parent are not always rewarding and enjoyable. People get into parenting with little information on what it takes. I wanted to be a mom so that I could be on my own. Somehow, becoming a teenager flipped a switch for me. That little taste of freedom, being able to stay out until 10:00 P.M., to go to parties and on dates was exciting. But I wanted more. I did not want to answer to anyone -- not my folks, not my yelling and screaming brothers and sisters, and not my teachers. When my pregnancy test came back positive it was my magical chance to be my own family. I could be my own boss.

Well, I've been my own boss for over 2 years now and it's scary. When I'm late for work I can't blame it on my mom for not waking me. When my term paper isn't finished I can't make my folks babysit all night, so I can do it. I hate responsibility. Freedom has turned out to be something different than what I bargained for. What I did bargain for was all the goodies and none of the work. I would not recommend anyone becoming a mom to establish independence.

I feel sad, angry, frustrated, and selfish when I think I brought a child of mine into the world when I was financially unstable, had no career goals, and no job experience. And because of these reasons, I was not emotionally ready to be a mom. In three years I had to learn to cook, do laundry and keep house, including how to keep budgets, balance a checking account, pay the utility bills, find good babysitters and afford them, not to mention finding beds, cribs, chairs, tables, pots, skillets, forks, knives, spoons, baby clothes, blocks, chalk boards, and everything else. I had to learn to drive, shop for food, find a job, decide on a career and then find out how I could manage establishing that career. I had to and am still learning how to handle the system -- welfare and its workers, employers, taxes and HUD, etc.

At this time I hold about 50 credits toward a degree along with three years experience in social service, but that doesn't make me $20,000 a year; it doesn't even pay $8,000. I would like to have the money to buy a house or car or swingset for my son. I'll get more down to earth than that. I couldn't support myself if I wanted to. I am stuck on public assistance. Even when I'm working, Children's Services Division has to pick up the childcare tab.

I could make the most amount of money as a secretary; probably $8,000 maximum. That doesn't sound feasible when my son's daycare is $6,200 a year, leaving $1,800 for rent, food, utilities, gas and recreation. I used to think $1,800 was a lot of money. I received $100 a month child support. I remember getting all excited that in a year that would be $1,200. All my son and I needed to do was survive.

I was a sophomore when I got pregnant and thinking I would finish high school, I went to Wynn Watts School. They have a program there geared to teenage moms. Included in that program is a health class offering prenatal care and rap groups for mothers and mothers-to-be. It was stimulating to be there amid the dozen others in my position. It was a little break and support compared to the pressures from home and the father.

When I started getting into the mother role I found myself not interested in my "immature" friends and they were not interested in me. I was left with no support system, no one to talk to, and I felt very much alone. I heard about a young parents group at the Southeast Youth Service Center and decided to try it out. Attending the group was one of the better ideas I've had. There, I met other teenage moms that I could share feelings with, feelings that had never had a chance to escape. Who else is going to care that single parents with children under 4 can't even take a shower unless the children are in bed, except other single parents? It's frustrating when the only people to talk to at home are under 2½ feet tall. I also got some good ideas about parenting and finding a job and an apartment.

A lot of things have changed since then. I am not with my son's dad. We decided that high school romances aren't all they're cracked up to be. We had a good time together in high school, going to the games, the proms, and making out in the car, but when it came down to life and responsibility, love and caring, we didn't work out. Being immature about almost everything didn't allow for experience in how to get along with the urge to see other people, or be positive about ourselves and our feelings.

For two months we fought about the pregnancy most every night. We decided that our relationship was not constructive and raising a baby was just not a good enough reason to stay together. I'm happy with the friendship we have now. It took a lot of work to get where we are now, but it's warm and comfortable and my son gets to see his dad.

Going to school, being a mom, and working is as hard as I anticipated way back when, but I live it every day. An average day for me includes unexpected tensions: oatmeal spilled on the floor, messy training pants two minutes before we're going through the door, and an occasional illness.

It takes us two hours to get ready to go anywhere. I have to get two people dressed and it takes longer to dress him now than when he was 6 months old. He wants to do it himself. Have you ever noticed how long it takes a three-year-old to put on one sock, and backwards at that? I have to cook

for us and feed us, help put the toys away, grab some coats, head out the door, wait as he takes one step at a time walking down the front stairs and then to the van as he smells every flower, comments on all the passing cars, and then wants to take mama kitty with us. We're late again!

Any regrets? Yes. I missed out on the planning of my child. I missed out on choosing the month of my child's birth. I missed out on choosing a partner that I would want to live with and have a child with. I missed out on "that special time in life" when I would be emotionally ready and financially able to run to Planned Parenthood demanding my IUD be removed, and screaming from the housetops with joy that now I could work on conceiving a baby. I simply missed out.

#15 Reasons For and Against Being a Childfree Person

PURPOSE

At first glance, this may seem to be a repeat of Activity #11, which discusses reasons for and against being a parent. It is true that reasons against being a parent are reasons for being childfree and vice-versa. However, the choice to be childfree is more than a rejection of parenthood. It is a positive decision to give priority to other adult roles and seek fulfillment in other ways. This activity will expose students to explanations childfree individuals give for their choice. Students will have the opportunity to discuss the explanations. Activities #16 and 17 supplement this one by exploring pressures felt by childfree people and nurturing roles outside parenthood.

Childfree people do not necessarily eliminate all interaction with children. Some do choose to be involved with children in ways besides parenthood.

ACTIVITY

To prepare for the session, copy or cut and paste the "Why I'm Childfree" statements from the following worksheet on to index cards and place the cards in a box. Or, write them onto the chalkboard or newsprint.

Explain to the group that some students will be playing the role of people who have decided that they do not want to be parents -- they want to be childfree. Other students will listen to the childfree people and ask questions.

Assign 15 students the childfree role and ask them to read the "Why I'm Childfree" statements, one at a time. They need to set aside personal agreement or disagreement with the statement, in order to play the role.

After one statement is read, allow one question from a student who is not playing the childfree role. The question could be in the form, "Won't you be giving up _____?" Allow the childfree person to make one remark to answer the questioner. Go on with the remaining 14 statements in a similar manner.

DISCUSSION

In processing this exercise, discuss the concept of choice. How does making one choice eliminate or influence other choices? Can a person do everything he/she wants to do? How does a person decide what is most important? Would some people choose to have both a career and a child? Why would some people feel they can't do both? Discuss how people can show acceptance and respect for each other's choices.

WORKSHEET
ACTIVITY #15: REASONS FOR AND AGAINST BEING A CHILDFREE PERSON

Why I'm Childfree

1. I like to be able to pick up and go when I want to go.

2. I'm involved in so many activities that I have meetings four nights every week.

3. I like my career and I would not want to send a child to a day care center or babysitter while I worked.

4. I really like spending my free time with my spouse. We value our private times together more than anything else.

5. I feel my decision not to have children is a gift to the overcrowded world and the people already in it.

6. I want to spend my spare time working to be the best artist I can possibly be.

7. I want to live in the country and get by on a small income.

8. I am away on business for one week out of every month and I don't have much time for a home life.

9. By the time I'm 35, I want to travel to ten countries and speak two foreign languages.

10. I enjoy being alone a lot and spending time the way I choose.

11. I want to enjoy my life and not be worried about making enough money to support a child.

12. I'm a very organized person who plans ahead -- too many unexpected things happen with kids.

13. I like kids but prefer the company of adults most of the time.

14. I always had to spend a lot of time caring for my brothers and sisters and now I want time for myself.

15. I like kids but I feel I can do more good as a Big Sister or counselor than as a parent.

#16 Pressures Felt by Childfree People

PURPOSE

This activity will help students examine typical pressures which childfree people feel because they have chosen to be childfree. Students will explore ways of dealing with these outside pressures. This activity is based on the idea that an individual is ultimately responsible for his/her own life decision. A decision may be influenced by other people, but it should not be made by other people. This principle can be applied to other life situations.

ACTIVITY

Divide the group into small groups. Each group will be playing the role of "Mabel," an advice columnist who must respond to a letter from a childfree person who is experiencing pressure as a result of his/her decision. Make copies of the five letters from the following worksheet and ask each group to read and respond to one of the five letters. Group members will individually write down a few sentences in response to the letter and then share them in the small group.

DISCUSSION

After the small groups have had the opportunity to share their responses, ask a representative from each group to read the letter to the whole group and summarize briefly how the small group responded. Do students think that people who decide to be childfree will face these kinds of pressures? Why or why not? How do students feel about the complaints made by the childfree people who wrote the letters? Do they agree with the viewpoint of any of the relatives or friends who objected to the idea of not having kids? What should a person do when another person offers advice about a personal matter? How much should a person let other people guide his/her actions and decisions? What if the other person is a parent? A close friend? How does a person make a decision based on his/her own desires and needs when other people try to interfere in the decision?

WORKSHEET, page 1
ACTIVITY #16: PRESSURES FELT BY CHILDFREE PEOPLE

Letters to Mabel

#1 - Dear Mabel,

I am 29 years old and love my life -- except for one thing. My mother keeps asking me when I'm going to have a baby. I'm afraid to tell her that I don't think I'm ever going to have one. I love the work that I do and I don't think I can put the necessary energy into raising a child. My mother is counting on having grandchildren before she dies and I'm the only one in my family who is married.

Signed,

29 and Holding Out

#2 - Dear Mabel,

I'm beginning to wonder if I need to find a whole new set of friends. Whenever my wife and I get together socially, we feel like the odd couple. All of our friends either have children or are expecting to in the near future. They keep hinting around about our "joining the crowd." The fact is my wife and I feel that two's company. We like our life just the way it is. We don't want to follow the crowd. What can I say to my friends when they start in on the "baby" routine?

Signed,

Childfree in Illinois

#3 - Dear Mabel,

I'm 25 and single and I have arrived at a decision which people might think is unusual for a person my age. I've decided that I don't ever want to have a child and I'm thinking about getting sterilized. When I asked my doctor about the procedure during my last check-up, he told me I was too young to think about such a thing. How can I convince people that I'm serious? I've given this a lot of thought. There are too many other things I want to do in my life. Where can I find a doctor who will listen?

Signed,

Young But Decided

#4 - Dear Mabel,

My husband and I have been married 10 years and we have no children -- by choice. We decided about five years ago that we were not cut out to be parents. We like kids but do not want to deal with them 24 hours a day. We have not had any regrets about our decision but find that other people sometimes hint that we are being selfish. My sister-in-law does not actually use that word, but she drops lines like, "When are you two going to give up your swinging life and have a family?" She makes it sound like we're living it up and not being responsible adults. My husband and I both work long hours and live in a small city apartment. She's the one who had to move to a big, fancy house in the suburbs -- for the kids! How can I convince her that we are not selfish just because we don't want children?

Signed,

Mother of None

#5 - Dear Mabel,

I sometimes eat lunch with a guy in my office who is starting to get on my nerves. He's always talking about sex and scoring with women. Lately he's starting to make comments about the fact that I don't have any children. He thinks that getting somebody pregnant proves you're a man. My wife and I are pretty sure that we don't want to have any kids. Even if we wanted kids, I certainly wouldn't have one for that reason. How can I tell this guy I think he's off the wall?

Signed,

Childless and Male

#17 Nurturing Roles Outside Parenthood

PURPOSE

This activity will expose students to ways that people help to nurture or care for other people without being a mother or father. Many of the skills which good parents use to help children grow and to feel good about themselves are skills used in other human relationships. This exercise will help students define nurturing skills and how they are used in a variety of roles -- spouse, aunt, uncle, friend, brother, sister. Students will also discuss how nurturing skills are used in professional roles -- nurse, teacher, counselor, etc.

ACTIVITY

Prepare 2 copies of the 4 short skits from the following worksheet. When the group meets, ask for eight volunteers to be in the skits (two characters in each). Assign each student a role and allow time for the players to read the dialogue before performing. Introduce the characters to the group before the skit begins. Allow all four skits to be performed before discussion.

DISCUSSION

After the skits, begin the discussion by asking students to think about why the nurse, Ms. Wong, feels like a parent to all the children at the special school. What did James do for Gloria that made him seem like a caring person? What did Rachel do for Tommy? What did Theresa do for Lucy? In what other ways do friends take care of each other? Brothers or sisters? Ask students to share experiences of caring for someone or an experience when someone took care of them (besides a mother or father).

Talk about what it means to nurture someone. The word "nurture" comes from a Latin word meaning to nurse or suckle a baby. In what ways do parents nurture children besides feeding them? In what ways do other people nurture each other?

The following words are related to the word "nurture": sustain, support, educate, nurse, care for, attend to, bring up. What are specific ways that people care for or support each other? What groups in our society may need special kinds of care (e.g., handicapped, elderly, children)? Why is it important to be a "nurturing" person?

WORKSHEET, page 1
ACTIVITY #17: NURTURING ROLES OUTSIDE PARENTHOOD

SKIT #1

Characters -- Theresa and her friend, Lucy, both age 14. They are meeting at a street corner to walk to a holiday party together.

LUCY: Hi! What do you have on that plate you're carrying?

THERESA: Carrot sticks and low-cal dip. I made it to help you stay on your diet at the party.

LUCY: Thanks a lot, Theresa. I need all the help I can get!

THERESA: Well, what are friends for?

LUCY: Thanks to you I'll be able to munch on carrots and keep my hand out of the potato chip bowl.

SKIT #2

Characters -- Tommy, age 6, and his Aunt Rachel, age 16. They have just come back to Tommy's apartment after an afternoon at the park.

TOMMY: Thanks for taking me to the park, Aunt Rachel.

RACHEL: Well, you know, Tommy, I think I had as much fun as you did.

TOMMY: I think I liked climbing on the jungle gym best.

RACHEL: You're good at doing that, Tommy.

TOMMY: You're a good aunt! Almost as good as my dad!

SKIT #3

Characters -- James and Gloria, husband and wife, sitting at home, watching TV.

GLORIA: Would you mind getting up and bringing me some water and an aspirin, James?

JAMES: Sure. What's the matter? You have a headache?

GLORIA: Yeah. It's really pounding.

JAMES: Here you are. How about if I rub your neck to help your head feel better?

GLORIA: That would be good. You know, James, I really appreciate the way you take care of me!

SKIT #4

Characters -- Ms. Wong is a nurse in a special education class; Ms. Brown is a parent of a handicapped child who has just cut his lip.

MS. BROWN: Thank you so much for calling me and for taking care of Michael's lip. I hope that it won't need stitches.

MS. WONG: I'm glad that I was able to reach you at work. He needs to have that lip checked out in the emergency room.

MS. BROWN: You do such a good job here at the center. It gives me such peace of mind to know he's here. It's a big worry to have a child like Michael.

MS. WONG: Well, I'll tell you. I treat all these kids as if they were my own. I hate to see anything bad happen to them!

#18 Role Play: Deciding the Parenthood/Childfree Question

PURPOSE

This activity will help students explore the issues which can arise when a couple is making a joint decision about parenthood. Students will be asked to put themselves in the place of people who take different approaches to the decision. The activity underscores the importance of people discussing their feelings about parenthood before taking actions based on what they assume their partners think or feel.

ACTIVITY

Prepare two copies of each of the three role play situations on the following worksheets. Ask for six volunteers to role play in the situations before the group. (Or, the whole group can be divided into small groups with two people in each group agreeing to play a role.) Each situation is a discussion between a man and a woman who are facing certain issues involved in the parenthood/childfree question. Spend about 5-10 minutes on each role play. Allow time after each one for students who are not in the role play to add comments.

DISCUSSION

After all role plays are completed, ask each student to make a quick list of the topics a couple needs to discuss before they decide about becoming parents. Ask each student to circle the three most important topics. Compile a group list from the ones circled as most important. What would happen if partners did not talk over feelings about these issues before having a child? Should a couple come to agreement on all these points? How could couples resolve their differences? Should they resolve their differences?

WORKSHEET, p. 1
ACTIVITY #18: ROLE PLAY: DECIDING THE PARENTHOOD/CHILDFREE QUESTION

Role Play #1

You and your partner have been happily married for one year. Before you married, you had decided that you would wait to have a baby until you felt ready. Now you have saved some money and are wondering if the time is right. You are starting to think about what it would be like to live with a baby. You never really thought about it before. You always assumed you would have kids but now you are worried about how caring for a baby would change the amount of time you spend with each other. Discuss with your partner some of the things you are worried about.

Role Play #2

You and your partner decided before you were married that you would wait a few years before deciding about kids. You talked a little about what parenthood is like and you both felt that you liked kids. You have just spent a weekend taking care of your niece and nephew and have found that you each had a different way of disciplining the children. (The husband always wanted to talk and reason with the child about what to do or not to do. The wife laid down rules and expected the children to obey. If they didn't obey, she would say, "No ice cream tonight.") The two of you have decided that you need to talk about your views on raising children before you decide about having one.

Role Play #3

Man's Role: You are in love with your partner and have decided you are ready to get married. Lately the two of you have been talking about a lot of things. You've just found out that she does not want to be a mother. You like kids and have looked forward to being a father. You want to be able to do all the things your father did with you. You don't really understand why your partner feels the way she does and you try to talk to her about it.

Woman's Role: You've spent the last four years of your life studying to be an accountant. Now you've made it. You're working in a firm and have the chance to advance. For a long time you've had the feeling that you were not cut out to be a mother. Although you like kids, you don't enjoy being around them very long. You love to have quiet times to yourself. Your work gives you a sense of accomplishment.

Lately, things have grown pretty serious with the man you are dating. You have started discussing marriage and children. You feel torn. You care a great deal for your partner but are worried that the two of you feel very differently about being parents. You try to talk to your partner about how you are feeling.

#19 Case Studies: Steps in Making the Decision

PURPOSE

This activity will help students identify possible steps involved in the parenthood/childfree decision process. Both the rationale and the process involved in the choice vary from person to person. Sometimes it might be wise to postpone a decision. Sometimes it is important for people to commit themselves to one option or the other. People need to be aware of actions they can take to resolve indecision. For students, the activity offers a preview of the decision-making process and a chance to articulate their own values about the decision.

ACTIVITY

Prepare copies of the six case studies from the following worksheets. They are about couples and individuals who are deciding about being parents or being childfree. Divide the class into 6 small groups and assign each group one of the case studies. One member in each group reads the case study. The members respond individually to the question: "Is the couple ready to decide?" After each member responds "yes" or "no," members have the opportunity to explain their reasons. The group should discuss what steps the couple could take before deciding. (Examples: see a marriage counselor, babysit for a child, talk about finances.) One group member should list the suggested steps to share with the total group later.

DISCUSSION

Each group reports back to the total group about the circumstances of the case study it discussed. What happens when people are leaning in one direction or the other? What should happen when partners do not agree? Why did students feel that the people in the case studies were ready or were not ready to decide? Compile a list of the various steps suggested by each group. Why is it sometimes good to postpone the decision? When is it not good to postpone? Can people ever be absolutely sure they are making the right decision?

Case Studies

Case #1

Faye is 18 and in her first year at a community college. She has just found out that she is pregnant. She has already broken up with the father of the child and is dating several other people. She was really enjoying her first year out of high school and looking forward to earning her associate's degree in computer programming. Faye feels torn and confused. One part of her really wants to have the baby. She feels she could be a good mother. The other part worries that she could not financially support a child right now. She hates the thought of dropping out of school and working at a dead-end job. Faye is afraid to talk to her parents about being pregnant, but feels the need to talk to someone. Is Faye ready to decide? If not, what steps could she take to help her decide?

Case #2

Rochelle and Richard are 30 and 33 and have been married four years. Rochelle is branch manager of a bank and Richard is a lawyer. They each make $30,000 a year. Before they married Rochelle had told Richard that she was not sure that she ever wanted to be a mother. Richard did not pressure her at the time. He figured that she might be willing to consider having a baby after her career was established. Rochelle now feels mixed up about being a mother. She sometimes thinks she might be missing an important experience. Rochelle's career is very demanding. She values her free time to be alone or to be with Richard. She feels that young babies need the attention of a full-time mother but she cannot imagine staying home all day with an infant. Are Rochelle and Richard ready to make a decision? If not, what steps could they take to help them decide?

Case #3

Paul and Pam are 23 and 22 and have been married two years. Paul is an office manager and Pam is a teacher. During their marriage they had problems and were separated once for four months but they got back together. Things were good between them until recently. Now they have frequent fights and arguments. Pam is ready to quit teaching. She has started thinking about what it would be like to have children. She feels that if she and Paul had a baby they would stop fighting with each other. Paul agrees that having a baby might make them feel closer in their relationship. Are Paul and Pam ready to decide? If not, what steps could they take to help them decide?

Case #4

Manuel and Margarita are 33 and 30 and have been married one year. Both of them work at the same department store. Manuel is a buyer and Margarita supervises a sales department. They make $32,000 total income. They have spent the past several months talking over the idea of having a child. Both of them are leaning towards wanting to be parents. They feel that their marriage is strong and that they are financially secure. They enjoy baby-sitting for Manuel's nephew. Their main confusion is about child care. Manuel feels that Margarita should not have to be the one to stay home. He wonders if they could both work part-time. They also wonder about what kind of child care is available if they both decided to keep working full time. Are Manuel and Margarita ready to decide? If not, what steps could they take to help them decide?

Case #5

Mike and Mary are 20 and 21 and have been married one year. Mary is a secretary and Mike is a construction foreman. Mary is anxious to have a child. She had a lot of experience caring for her younger brothers and sister and is looking forward to being a full-time mother. Mike likes kids, too, and feels he would be a good father. He makes enough money now to support Mary and a child but he worries about the future. The construction business can sometimes be slow in the winter. He would like to save more money before having a child. Mary feels that they have enough saved and that Mike worries too much about money. She feels that there is always a risk in having a child and that now is as good a time as any to take that risk. Are Mike and Mary ready to decide? If not, what steps could they take to help them decide?

Case #6

Paulette, age 16, and Perry, age 17, have been going together for a year. They have a good relationship and get along well. About six months ago, they started having intercourse when they made love. Now Paulette has found out she is pregnant. She told Perry and he wants to marry her. He's ready to graduate in 3 months and he said he could get a job. Paulette is worried about getting married. She doesn't feel ready to settle down with a baby and a husband. On the other hand, she loves Perry and maybe she would feel differently about a baby once it was born. Are Paulette and Perry ready to decide? If not, what could they do to help them decide?

#20 Lifeline: If I Choose To Be a Parent or To Be Childfree

PURPOSE

This activity complements Activity #2. It will help students visualize what the future might hold. Some students may find the exercise threatening and should be given the option of not doing it. You may prefer to do the exercise with individual students rather than the whole group. As with all the activities in this guide, it is not intended to encourage students to actually make a choice about parenthood. It is designed to help them see the options available to them.

ACTIVITY

Prepare copies of the "Lifeline" worksheet and distribute them to the students. Students will do the activity on an individual basis during a group session or at home.

DISCUSSION

After students have completed the exercise, ask them, "What was your reaction to doing this?" Students may or may not feel comfortable sharing the actual content of this exercise. It would be best to talk about the process. How did they feel about thinking about the future? Excited? Afraid? Worried? Hopeful? Did anyone come up with an idea they would like to share?

WORKSHEET, p. 1
ACTIVITY #20: LIFELINE: IF I CHOOSE TO BE A PARENT OR TO BE CHILDFREE

Lifeline

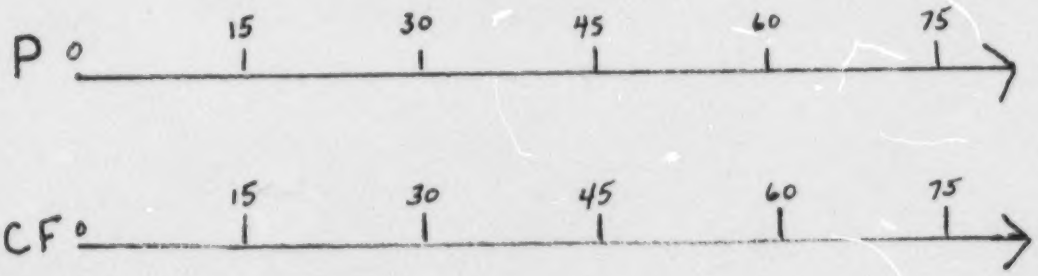
This is an exercise to do for yourself. You do not have to show it to anyone else or turn it in to the leader.

This exercise will help you think about the past events in your life and to think about what might happen in the future. Remember that you are not making a serious future plan. You are playing with ideas of what might or might not happen. Skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

1. On a large separate sheet of paper, draw two long horizontal lines across the page, one below the other.

2. Mark off each line into five equal parts. Label the first part age 0, the next age 15, then 30, 45, 60 and 75.

3. At the left side of one of the lines mark the letter "P." This will be to show what your life might be like if you decide to be a parent. Mark the other line "CF." This will be to show what your life might be like if you choose to be childfree. The lines will look like this:



4. On each line mark a spot and label important events that have happened to you in the past. For example, the year you were born (age 0), your first year in school, your first best friend, moves to new homes, special trips, first romance, other family events (birth, death, marriage, divorce).

5. Now start to think about what might happen in the future if you decide at some point to become a parent. Think about relationships, jobs, travel, special interests. When might you marry (if you chose marriage)? What do you picture doing before and after marriage? When might you have your first child? How many children might you have? Would you consider adopting a child? What might you do before and after having a child? What might happen after your child or children are grown? What about after 65? Mark points on your "P" line and label the events which might happen to you.

6. Now think about what might happen in the future if you decide not to be a parent (to be childfree). When might you marry (if you chose marriage)? What do you picture doing before and after marriage? What might you do at age 45 or after 65? Mark points on your "CF" line and label events which might happen to you (relationships, jobs, travel, special interests).

7. Did you fill out the two lines in different ways? Why or why not?

When you are finished, you might like to share your reaction to doing this exercise with the leader or with other students. Did you think about anything new or different from what you have thought about before?

Keep the lifeline as your own personal record of some of your thoughts and feelings at this time in your life.

Appendix A: Childlessness: Statistics and Trends

NOTE: In this appendix, the terms childless and voluntarily childless are carefully distinguished. "Childless" refers to people who have no children. They may be voluntarily or involuntarily childless and/or temporarily or permanently childless. "Voluntarily childless" is a term used by some researchers to describe those who choose to be childfree on a permanent basis. Some research studies do not distinguish among types of childlessness.

Statistics: How Many Are Childless?

From 1960 to 1979, increasing percentages of married women between the ages of 20 and 34 have been childless. According to U. S. Bureau of the Census figures (1) the percentages of ever-married childless women in each of three age groups were:

Age	1960	1979
20-24	24.2%	40.5%
25-29	12.6%	26.2%
30-34	10.4%	13.1%
Combined 20-34	15.7%	26.6%

The greatest increase is in the age groups 20-29. The increase could be accounted for by increases in three categories: those who delay motherhood, those who are infertile, and those who choose to be childless. Some demographers predict that many women who are delaying motherhood will have a child in their late twenties or early thirties. The Census Bureau speculates that many who are currently childless will remain childless: "Although it is not certain at this point in time, it is likely that these large proportions of young married women who are childless result from a decision not merely to delay motherhood but to remain forever childless." (1)

Besides determining how many women actually are childless, the Census Bureau also conducts surveys to find out whether or not women expect to bear children and if so, how many. Here are the percentages in four different years of married women, ages 18-39, who expected to bear no children during their lifetimes: (2)

1967	3.1%
1971	4.2%
1975	4.6%
1977	5.7%

The percentage of all women in this age group, married and unmarried, who expected to be permanently childless was 11% in 1977. Some of these women may be voluntarily childfree; others may be physically unable to bear children or some might change their minds.

The percentage increase in women expecting to remain childless has coincided with trends towards later age of marriage, later age of bearing a first child, and decreasing family size.

Statistics: Households Without Children

Although most people are parents or expect to be parents in their lifetimes, large percentages of people are not actively involved as parents of young children at a given point in time. According to the Census Bureau, about 41% of people in 1979 did not live in households with children under age 18. (3) A related statistic compares percentages of households or family units (as opposed to individuals) with and without children under 18. In 1978, 60% of all households and 53% of all families (including two or more related individuals) did not have children under age 18 living in them. (4) Of course, these figures include not only childfree people, but parents whose children are no longer at home and those who are delaying parenthood.

The Joint Center for Urban Studies has issued a report which projects household characteristics into 1990. (5) The Center makes the following projections of change over the next decade:

Type of Household	1980 Estimate	1990 Estimate
Unattached	39.5%	45.1%
Married		
No children	30.0%	27.2%
1 or more children	30.5%	27.7%

"Unattached" includes divorced, never married, or widowed individuals. The Center points out that these projections are based on the decisions by many people born during the "baby boom" years (1947-1961) to delay marriage and have small families.

Research About Voluntary Childlessness

Early studies about childless people tended to focus on involuntary childlessness or to confuse voluntary and involuntary childlessness. In some studies, voluntarily childless couples were viewed as deviant because they violated the childbearing norm.

In recent years, some studies of voluntarily childless married couples have been conducted. The studies have neglected singles, cohabiting couples, and those in communal situations. Some of the studies have not been well designed and they do not replicate each other's findings in all cases. (6)

Given the above limitations, it is difficult to generalize about the motivations and characteristics of childfree people. For example, some studies have indicated that childfree people are usually committed to careers. Other studies show that people choose to be childfree as a result of a complex interaction among many factors, including but not limited to employment variables. Some of the factors which have been studied are education, religion, length of marriage, and economic status. (6)

The decision to be childfree is often uniquely personal and made after considerable thought and reflection. Childfree people exhibit a full range of personality characteristics. The Childfree Alternative by Kate Harper (7) contains interviews with five childfree couples and five childfree singles, each of whom offers a personal perspective on the childfree lifestyle.

Although research studies have not discovered "a typical childfree person," some have found that people go through stages in making the decision to be childfree. Jean Veevers, author of Childless by Choice, a book of research findings, (8) found that many childfree people start out by postponing the parenthood decision. After observing the lifestyle of peers who become parents, they eventually decide in favor of not having children.

Gail A. Thoen's research (9) points to subsequent stages which many couples experience in committing themselves to the childfree choice: announcing the decision, defending it against criticism, and eventually receiving support from friends. Some who offer support are married friends with adolescent children who see non-parenthood as a wise choice.

Sharon K. Houseknecht's research (10) showed that a majority of women who chose to remain childless had reference group support for their decision. These reference groups consisted of people with whom the women could either identify or who provided support for their decision. These childfree women were less concerned than their counterparts about negative societal pressures to have children.

If you are interested in learning more about research on voluntary childlessness, two new resources are due to be published. Houseknecht will publish a review of the research literature in the Handbook of Marriage and the Family in late 1981. (11) She will also be guest editor of a special issue of the Journal of Family Issues on "Childlessness and the One-Child Family" due to be published in December, 1982.

Attitudes Towards Childlessness

Although many childfree people still experience criticism of their decision not to have children, there are signs that childlessness is becoming more acceptable than it was in the past. The 1980 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll (12) found that 82% of the women polled said that children were not essential for a full and happy marriage. Women with less education and women over fifty were more likely to disagree with this statement. The majority (51%) of those polled favored having two children.

Seventeen magazine (March, 1980) reported similar findings for teenage women. 44% of the teens surveyed felt that a childless marriage can be satisfying. Glamour magazine (August, 1980) reported that the majority of male and female college students sampled in a survey said that "they eventually want to have children, but more women than men are uncertain about it, and more women expect to put off having children until a later age."

Summary

Although it is difficult to give exact numbers and characteristics of voluntarily childless (childfree) people in the U.S., it is possible to make a few statements based on demographic and research data:

1. 26.6% of women in prime childbearing years (20-34) were childless in 1979, compared to 15.7% childless in this age group in 1960. (Includes all types of childless.)

2. About 5.7% of married women and 11% of all women, ages 18-39 said they expected no children in their lifetimes in 1977. This is a modest increase over the 1967 figure of 3.1% of wives who reported the same. (Includes voluntarily and involuntarily childless.)

3. Although the majority of people experience parenthood at some point in their lives, a large percentage of households do not have children under 18 living in them.

4. Research about voluntary childlessness is just beginning to emerge; studies have pointed out that people go through a series of steps in deciding to be childfree and that a complex interaction of many variables accounts for the decision.

5. American women, according to recent polls, believe that marriage without children can be satisfying. The majority think that two children is desirable.

The Census Bureau and opinion poll data used in this appendix are summarized in more detail in "Childlessness Statistics: Issues and Trends," a six-page fact sheet available from the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood. NAOP also publishes an updated bibliography of studies, magazine articles and books entitled, "A Decade of Voluntary Childlessness."

References

The first four references are from Current Population Reports of the U.S. Bureau of the Census:

1. "Percent Childless for Women Ever-Married, By Race, Spanish Origin, and Age: 1960 to 1979". (Table 4, Series P-20, #350, May 1980).

2. "Fertility of American Women". (Series P-20, Survey data gathered in June of each year and reported in fall of the following year).

3. "Marital Status and Living Arrangements". (Series P-20, #349, March 1979) and "Household and Family Characteristics". (Series P-20, #352, March 1979).

4. "Household and Family Characteristics". (Series P-20), #340, March 1978).

5. Joint Center for Urban Studies, Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Nation's Families 1960-1990. First of three-part report. 1980.

6. Schapiro, Barry. "Predicting the Course of Voluntary Childlessness in the 21st Century". Journal of Clinical Child Psychology. Summer 1980.

7. Harper, Kate, The Childfree Alternative. Brattleboro (VT): The Stephen Greene Press. 1980

8. Veevers, Jean, Childless By Choice. Toronto (Canada): Butterworths. 1980.

9. Thoen, Gail A., "Commitment Among Voluntary Childfree Couples to a Variant Lifestyle". Dissertation. University of Minnesota, 1977.

10. Houseknecht, Sharon K. "Reference Group Support for Voluntary Childlessness: Evidence for Conformity" Journal of Marriage and the Family. May 1977.

11. Sussman, Marvin, Editor. Handbook of Marriage and the Family. Due to be published in late 1981.

12. Roper Organization, Inc. The 1980 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll. Free booklet available by writing Fifth Floor, 100 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

Popular Magazine Articles

The following articles provide background information about the parenthood decision and the childfree choice. Publications are available at most libraries.

"Couples Without Children Can Have a Great Capacity for Dedication to the Larger Family of God". Randi Cragg. The Lutheran. October 17, 1979.

"Do You Want Children?". Dan Carlinsky. Seventeen. November 1976.

"How To Decide to Start/Stop Having Children". Edward Wakin and Fritzie Pantoga. U. S. Catholic. December 1978.

"The Impact of Tiny Feet on Love". Davidyne Mayleas. Self. August 1980.

"The Intentionally Childless Couple". Denzel E. Benson. U. S. A. Today. January 1979.

"Should I Have a Baby?". Terri Schultz. Working Women. November 1979.

"Want a Baby?" Mary Louise Gersheker. Bride's. August/September 1975.

Appendix B: Resource List

NOTE: This is a selected list of resources on parenthood, teenage pregnancy, and childfree choice. Some resources are designed for use by adolescents; others provide background information for the educator. Titles of individual texts and books are not included due to space limitations.

FILMS

These are available for purchase or rental, as indicated. Check local libraries and resource centers for availability. Titles selected are appropriate for adolescent groups. Preview films to determine if they are suitable for your specific group.

Teenage Parenthood

LUCY: A TEENAGE PREGNANCY (1979, 10 minutes, color/sound, Perennial Education, Inc. 477 Roger Williams, PO Box 855 Ravinia, Highland Park, IL 60035). The story of a 15-year old mother who lives in a housing project with her mother, baby and siblings. Lucy feels it is fine to be a mother at her age and has dreams of getting a job and her own place. The film shows viewers how caring for a baby at a young age will make it difficult for Lucy to realize her dreams. (Purchase or rental)

TEENAGE FATHER (1978, 30 minutes, color/sound, Children's Home Society of California, 5429 McConnell Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90006). Academy Award winner for best short film. Dramatized documentary about how a 17-year old boy and 15-year old girl react to pregnancy and parenthood. Conflict centers around the girl's decision to keep the baby; the boy finds he has no rights. (Purchase or rental)

WE WERE JUST TOO YOUNG (1979, 28 minutes, color/sound, MIT Teleprograms, Inc., 4825 N. Scott St., Suite 23, Schiller Park, IL 60176). A documentary about a teenage couple and their two-year old son. The girl shares her affectionate feelings for her son, her problems and her frustrations in living with restricted freedom. The film explores the couple's separation from both the boy's and the girl's viewpoints. The girl's family supports her but she is responsible for the baby. Realistic portrayal.

GINGER (3 minutes, Planned Parenthood of East Central Georgia, Inc. P.O. Box 3293, Augusta, GA 30904). Trigger film which portrays a teen announcing to her girlfriend that she is pregnant and their groping for a solution. (Purchase)

GRETCHEN (3 minutes, Planned Parenthood of East Central Georgia, Inc., P.O. Box 3293, Augusta, GA 30904). Trigger film which depicts a single teenage mother trying to convince a friend that her life as a mother is really not so bad. (Purchase)

WAYNE'S DECISION (1979, 7 minutes, color/sound, Bureau of Community Health Services, Office for Family Planning, Rm. 715, 5600 Fisher's Lane, Rockville, MD 20857). A trigger film. Wayne announces to his parents that his girlfriend is pregnant and he is thinking of marrying her. His parents react negatively. The film cuts off before the conflict is resolved. (Purchase or rental)

Parenthood

ADAPTING TO PARENTHOOD (1975, 20 minutes, color/sound, Polymorph Films, 331 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02115). Follows a young couple as they adjust to arrival of first baby. Attempts realistic portrayal-- early morning feedings, rushed breakfast table conversation, cuddling the baby, frayed nerves, exhilaration. (Purchase or Rental)

HELP! I'M A NEW PARENT (24 minutes, color/sound, Churchill Films, 662 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069). Depicting three young couples experiencing the impact of a first baby. New roles, stresses on marriage are covered. Couples cope successfully but the job does not look easy. (Purchase)

LOOK AT ME! (1976, 28 minutes each, color/sound, Perennial Education, Inc. P.O. Box 855 Ravinia, Highland Pk., IL 60035). Series of six films produced for Chicago public TV. Shows real parents and children learning together. Encourages parents to teach through everyday experiences. Segments are realistic examples of parent-child interaction.

Titles: Everyday Parenting, The Working Mother, Grandmother and Leslie, The Single Parent, Child/Parent Relationships (composite of others). (Purchase or rental)

NEW RELATIONS (1980, 34 minutes, color/sound, Plainsong Productions, 47 Halifax St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130). A film about fathers and sons. On his son's first birthday, a father looks back on the costs and rewards of becoming a parent. Includes discussion with wife and with his own father about differences in fathering styles between two generations. (Purchase or rental)

PARENTING CONCERNS: THE FIRST TWO YEARS (21 minutes, color/sound, Perennial Education, Inc., P.O. Box 855 Ravinia, Highland Park, IL 60035). Explores many common but perplexing child-rearing situations-- feeding, crying, husband-wife tensions, toddler explorations. Introduces prospective parents to schedule demands of a baby. Problems treated as challenges to grow with child. (Purchase or rental)

Childfree People

YOU CAN'T MEAN NOT EVER (1977, 25 minutes, color/sound, National Alliance for Optional Parenthood, 2010 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036). Centers on one couples' reactions to the social pressures towards childbearing. Discussion of childfree lifestyle. Produced by University of Minnesota. (Rental)

OTHER MULTI-MEDIA SOURCES

CASETTE COMMUNICATIONS (175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010). Publishes cassettes of experts speaking on variety of behavioral science topics. Titles include: Fathering, Having a Healthy Baby, Adoption, Working Mothers, Children of Divorce, Teaching Children About Sex. (Purchase)

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD (1975, Booklets, films, filmstrips, posters, records, cassettes, Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160). Designed and tested as a full year "Education for Parenthood" program under the U. S. Office of Child Development. Three basic modules: Working with Children, Seeing Development, Family and Society. Emphasis on "real" experience. Catalogue available. (Purchase whole or part)

J.C. PENNEY COMPANY, INC. (1301 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019). Publications and multi-media materials on many topics, including parenthood. One filmstrip teaching unit for teenagers is called Parenting: Fathers, Mothers, and Others. Send for catalogue.

LIFE SKILLS: WOULD YOU BE A GOOD PARENT? (229 slides in 3 carousel cartridges with cassettes or records, Center for Humanities, Inc., Communication Park, Box 1000, Mt. Kisco, NY 10549). Prompts students to think about whether they wish to be parents and, if so, what kind of parents they would like to be. Part One: Interviews with parents looking back on rewards and diffuculties. Part Two: Vignettes which dramatize common childhood behavior problems. Part Three: Emphasizes importance of childhood memories in choosing parenthood style.

MCGRAW-HILL FILMS (1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020). Series of films on ages and stages of child development produced by National Film Board of Canada. Many other related films. (Purchase or rental)

PARENTS' MAGAZINE FILMS, INC. (Filmstrip series, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, NY 10017). Parenthood in America series: four filmstrips dealing with history of parenthood and attitudes towards children. Other series topics: Children in crisis, handicapped, minorities, and effective parenting.

PARENTHOOD: A SERIES (Filmstrips and cassettes, Guidance Associates, 757 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017). Four filmstrips: Preparing for Parenthood, Pregnancy, Preparing for Birth, Birth.

PRACTICING PARENTING (1980, student workbook, two records, Butterick Publishing, P.O. Box 1945, Altoona, PA 16603). Offers exercises, short readings, games and audio dramatizations

for learning about children. Participants asked to weigh advantages and disadvantages of behaviors. (Purchase)

SMALL WONDER (1979, Kit of 150 activity cards, guide, baby book, picture cards, puppet, American Guidance Service, Publisher's Bldg., Circle Pines, MN 55014). Designed to be used by parents with a child during first 18 months. Parent as teacher is focus. (Purchase whole or part)

SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY (211 E. Seventh St., Austin, TX 78731). Conducts research, develops materials, and provides technical assistance in child development. Produces Positive Parent television spots with accompanying booklets. Publishes Parenting in 1977, a listing of 3700 parent education materials.

STARTING A HEALTHY FAMILY SERIES (1978, Booklets, Posters, audio case studies, filmstrips, Education Development Center, Inc., 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160). Unit called Choosing Parenthood contains booklet with classroom exercises, case studies of nine parents and one childfree couple, descriptions of nine months of pregnancy, and research notes. Accompanied by posters and 7 audio case studies. Other units: Special needs children, personal habits which affect unborn child. (Purchase whole or part)

SYSTEMATIC TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTING (1975, Kit for leader of parent group, American Guidance Service, Publisher's Bldg., Circle Pines, MN 55014). Flipcharts, posters, cassettes, and handbook designed to be a step-by-step guide for a leader working to help parents improve their skills. Nine sessions. (Purchase whole or part)

TRANSFORMER (1980, Omni Education, P.O. Box 220, Somerville, NJ 08876). A simulation game which invites students to take care of an infant for one day. Designed for eight players. Players feed, diaper, bathe, shop, manage money, and make decisions in the course of play. Includes gameboard and playing pieces. (Purchase)

PUBLICATION SOURCES

CONSUMER INFORMATION CENTER (Pueblo, CO 81009). Send for catalogue of free and low cost government pamphlets. Many titles on parenthood and child development.

CURRICULUM INNOVATIONS, INC. (501 Lake Forest Ave., Highwood, IL 60040). Publishes Current Lifestudies, a monthly magazine for student use focusing on peer relations. Covers parenting and family life. Subscription price per student.

NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR FAMILY PLANNING INFORMATION (P.O. Box 2225, Rockville, MD 20852). Publishes information bulletin and distributes pamphlets on many topics, including teenage parenthood and pregnancy. Pamphlet-- The Hassles of Becoming a Teenage Parent.

PAPERBACKS FOR EDUCATORS (737 Knickerbacker, Manchester, MO 63011). Catalogue lists thousands of books on many topics, including child development, family living, health and sex education, parenting. Will order any hardcover or paperback. Phone orders accepted. (314-227-2590)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, INC. (381 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016). Non-profit publisher of 200 pamphlets on many topics, including parenting, marriage and family, health and child guidance. Good for student research on special topics or to introduce teacher to subject matter. Inexpensive, concise and readable. cf. Preparing Tommorrow's Parents (#520) and What Should Parents Expect from Children (#357).

WHAT'S HAPPENING (Emory University Memorial Hospital Family Planning Program, 80 Butler St., S.E., Atlanta, GA 30303). Magazine designed to answer teenagers' questions about sexuality. Sometimes includes parenthood information.

ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN HOME ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION (2010 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036). Membership organization for home economists. Publishes materials and sponsors workshops at annual meeting for parenthood educators.

BOYS CLUBS OF AMERICA (771 First Ave., New York, NY 10017). Youth development organization which has special program and guide booklets called Help-A-Kid. Designed to help teens learn about themselves and younger children. Conducts workshops for youth workers in this program.

CENTER FOR PARENT EDUCATION (55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160). Public service organization offering assistance to professionals about the education of children to age 4. Publishes newsletter, sells research reports, sponsors conferences. Dr. Burton L. White, Director.

CENTER FOR POPULATION OPTIONS (2031 Florida Avenue, N.W., Suite 301, Washington, D. C. 20008). Develops programs and materials designed to encourage teens to be sexually responsible. Uses mass media through Rock Project and Sports Project (celebrity messages for teens). Works with youth-serving agencies to help develop sexuality education programs. Directed towards preventing problems associated with unwanted teenage pregnancies.

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA (67 Irving Place., New York, NY 10003). National advocacy and membership organization for people interested in juvenile justice, foster care, group care, day care. Distributes Parenting Curriculum for pregnant adolescents of six workbooks on prenatal and infant development.

4-H (Science and Education Administration/Extension, USDA, Rm 5028 S., Washington, D. C. 20250). Youth membership groups with programs in 3150 counties in the U. S. Uses Education for Parenthood materials developed by the Office of Child Development. Possible source of local support or cooperation.

FUTURE HOMEMAKERS OF AMERICA (2010 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036). Membership organization for teens. Special Program: Healthy Babies: Chance or Choice? Publishes Teen Times, a magazine for teens.

GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA (205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016). Federation of local clubs serving girls and teens. Interest in teen pregnancy/parenthood. Some local clubs conduct programs in this area.

THE HOME AND SCHOOL INSTITUTE (c/o Trinity College, Washington, D. C. 20017). Established to enhance educational partnership between home and school. Publishes materials to help parents teach children skills at home. Special project for assisting parents of learning disabled children.

INSTITUTE FOR FAMILY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (Syracuse University, 760 Ostrom Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210). Sponsors National Family Sex Education Week. Publishes the journal Impact. Supports research and programs in sex and parent education.

MARCH OF DIMES (P. O. Box 2000, White Plains, NY 10602). National foundation which supports programs designed to prevent birth defects.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (1834 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009). Membership organization for early childhood educators and others concerned with the welfare of young children. Publishes books on parent/family topics as well as early childhood curriculum.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS (1219 University Avenue, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414). Professional membership organization which publishes materials in family life/parent education field and sponsors conferences. Family Resource and Referral Center of NCFR is a national computerized information file of family field materials and articles. Custom searches conducted by phone or mail request. Computer access through many university and major libraries. (612-331-2774)

NATIONAL PTA (700 N. Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611). Resources include How to Help Children Become Better Parents a resource kit of advocacy strategies, samples, and program description. Sponsors joint project with March of Dimes which aims to alert parents and educators to the need to integrate parent education into school curricula.

PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS, INC. (7910 Woodmont Avenue, Washington, D. C. 20014). Advocacy and mutual-help group for single parents. Publishes books, pamphlets, journal. Local chapters could be used as contacts for classroom guests.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA (810 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019). Publishes family planning pamphlets for teens. Department of Education is establishing clearinghouse of resource materials in the field. Over 700 local affiliate chapters which operate clinics. Community educators available in some localities who visit classrooms and community groups.

U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT (Parent, Early Childhood, and Special Programs, Rm. 2083, 400 Maryland Ave., S. W., Washington, D. C. 20202). This office of the Department of Education coordinates federal efforts in the parenthood education field. Will answer requests for information and supply catalogue of Exploring Childhood materials (developed by former Office of Child Development).

U. S. OFFICE FOR FAMILIES (Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, DHHS, Rm. 5030, 6th and D Sts., S. W., Washington, D. C. 20201). Office established in 1980. Plans to publish a catalog or inventory of all DHHS parent education materials. Write for information.

NAOP RESOURCES

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR OPTIONAL PARENTHOOD (2010 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036). See publication order form for current prices. Bulk rates for pamphlets.

For Adolescents

AM I PARENT MATERIAL? Pamphlet which lists questions to consider before deciding about whether or not to become a parent. 1977.

ARE YOU KIDDING YOURSELF? A cartoon leaflet for teens on teenage pregnancy and a list of projects for teen involvement. Young couple makes love in a van and later decides that they must act responsibly because "having a kid is a heavy responsibility." 1978.

DAYS OF DECISION. An 8-page illustrated tabloid in "soap opera" format focusing on crucial decision-making aspects of family size, with emphasis on the one-child family. Recommended for a young audience in both the school and counseling setting. 1981.

Background Information for Educators

OPTIONAL PARENTHOOD: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. Illustrated brochure which provides answers to frequently asked questions about optional parenthood and childfree living. 1979.

CHILDREN? WHY NOT? A pamphlet which discusses the decision whether to have children or remain childfree, including a synopsis of the research regarding how children affect marital satisfaction, a quiz on reasons for having children or remaining childfree. 1979.

SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES TO TEENAGE PREGNANCY. A collection of 20 articles including successful and innovative programs for teenagers, with ideas and resources in the field of teen pregnancy prevention. 1978.

CHILDLESSNESS STATISTICS: ISSUES AND TRENDS. A six-page compilation of current Census Bureau and national polls statistics, including attitudes and expectations about parenthood. 1980.

RESEARCH KIT. A packet containing research and statistical information on the childfree lifestyle plus all NAOP pamphlets. 1980.

DECADE OF VOLUNTARY CHILDLESSNESS: A BIBLIOGRAPHY. Over eighty annotated studies, dissertations and papers on voluntary childlessness and parenthood/childfree decision-making. Also listed, national magazine articles and books. Updated annually.

TEENAGE PREGNANCY: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY. Annotated 21-page resource list of printed materials available on teenage pregnancy. 1978.

Tools for Educators/Counselors

THE PARENTHOOD OPTION: A MANUAL FOR PROFESSIONALS HELPING PEOPLE DECIDE WHETHER TO HAVE CHILDREN OR REMAIN CHILDFREE. Designed for educators, counselors and researchers to use in a variety of settings, e.g., the classroom, social service agency and private practice. The manual contains suggested activities, annotated resource lists, and step-by-step directions for implementing and evaluating a variety of procedures, tools, and skills for programs on decision-making about whether to have children or remain childfree, 1979.

OPTIONAL PARENTHOOD QUESTIONNAIRE. A 12-page questionnaire for use as a tool in preconception counseling to assist clients in assessing desire and readiness for parenthood. Recommended for social workers, counselors, mental health professionals. 1978.

CLINICIAN'S MANUAL. For use with Optional Parenthood Questionnaire. A guide for administering, scoring and interpreting the Questionnaire. 1978.

TEENS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE: A MANUAL FOR CONDUCTING HIGH SCHOOL PRESS CONFERENCES. A step-by-step guide for planning and conducting press conferences for high school journalists, specifically in the area of teenage pregnancy and generally applicable to other subject areas. Includes sample materials. 1978.

EVALUATION

NAOP needs to know your reaction in order to modify or change this guide in the future. Write your positive or negative comments about Exploring the Parenthood Choice on this page and return the form to: Curriculum Project, National Alliance for Optional Parenthood, 2010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036

General Reaction (Purpose, readability, balance, etc.)

Reaction to Specific Activities

1. Are you using the guide directly with adolescents?

   _____

2. Which activities are most effective with your group?

   _____

3. Which activities are least effective?

   _____

4. Did you learn anything new from the guide?

   _____

5. Use the following space to write positive or negative comments and suggested changes for specific activities:

   Activity # _____

   Activity # _____

   Activity # _____

Occupation _____

Name (optional) _____

Name and address of employer (optional)

_____

_____

_____

Please use the reverse side of this form for additional comments.